

Mahabharata - 35

ARJUNA FULFILS HIS VOW

WHEN ARJUNA TOOK A VOW TO KILL JAYADRATHA, AND TWANGED HIS BOW AND KRISHNA BLEW LUSTILY ON HIS CONCH, PANCHAJANYA, THE VERY EARTH TREMBLED WITH THE COMBINED SOUNDS.



"THE SCENE IS NARRATED TO DHRTA-RASHTRA BY SANJAYA, WHO HAS BEEN GIFTED WITH DIVINE VISION BY SAGE VYASA.

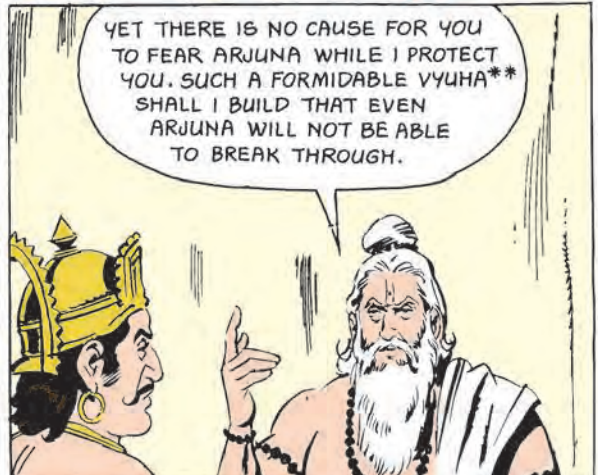
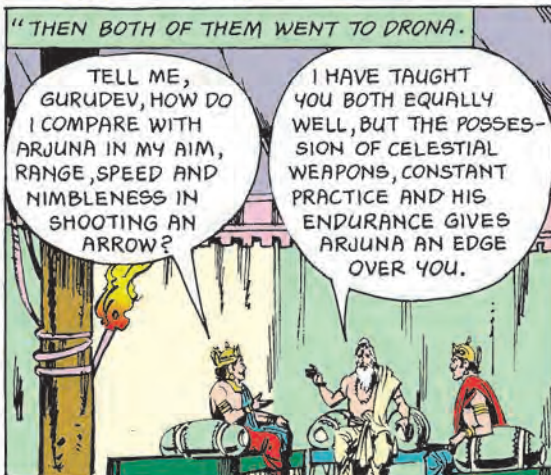
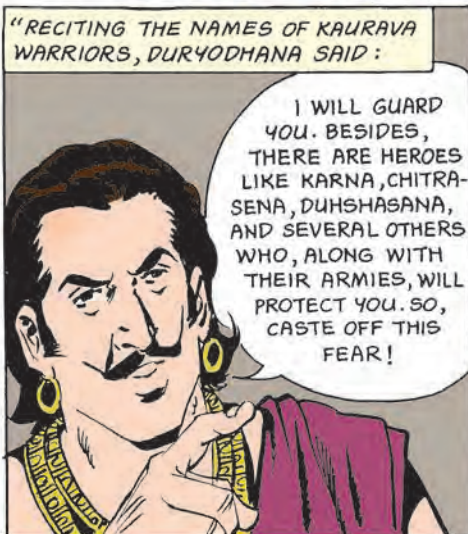
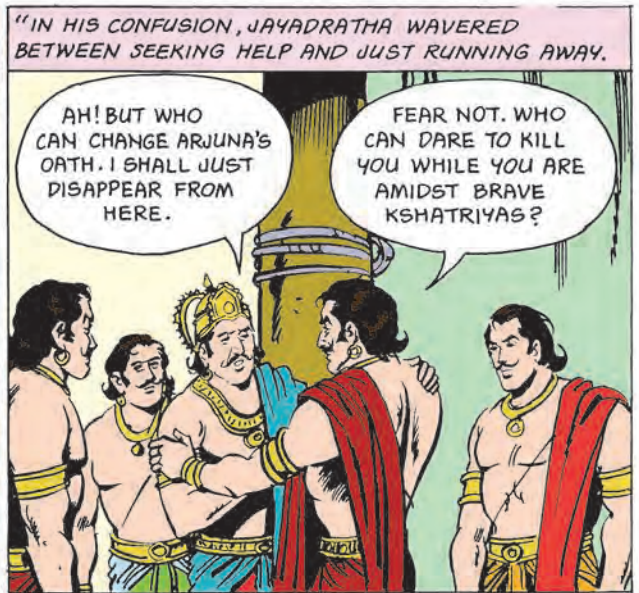
THIS GREAT SOUND REACHED JAYADRATHA'S EARS AND THE NEWS OF ARJUNA'S VOW, WHICH HE RECEIVED FROM THE SPIES, TERRIFIED HIM.



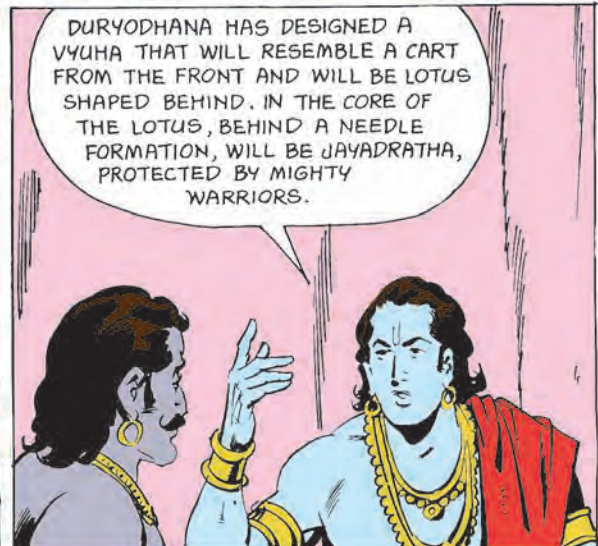
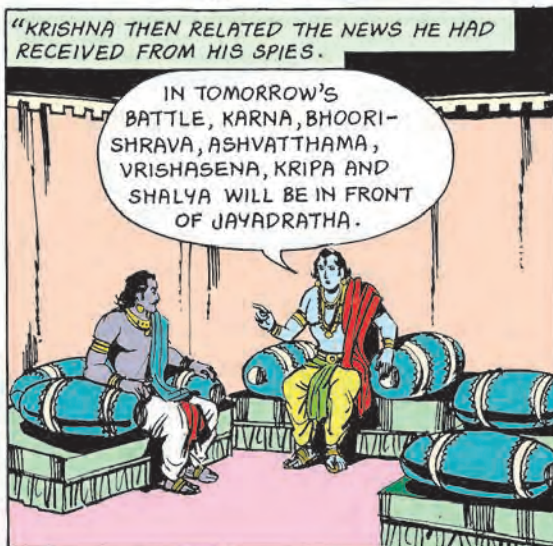
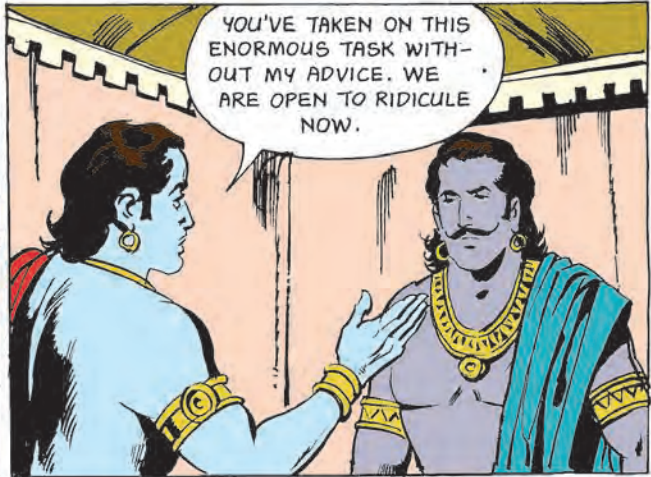
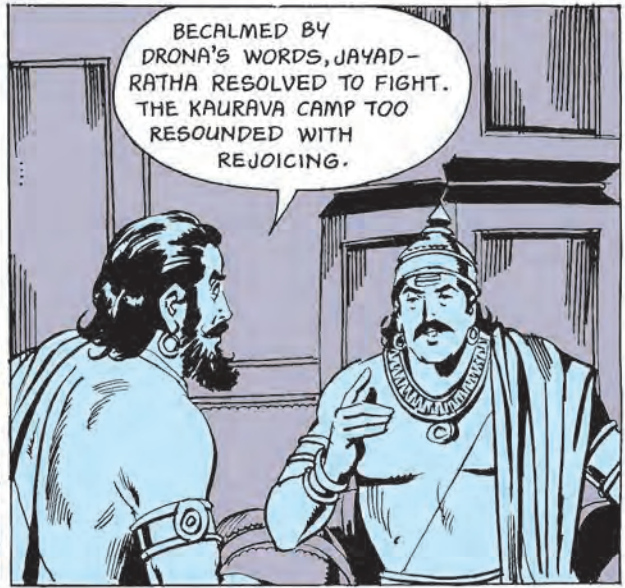
"IMMERSED IN AN OCEAN OF SORROW AND FEAR, HE RUSHED TO THE KING'S ENCLOSURE.

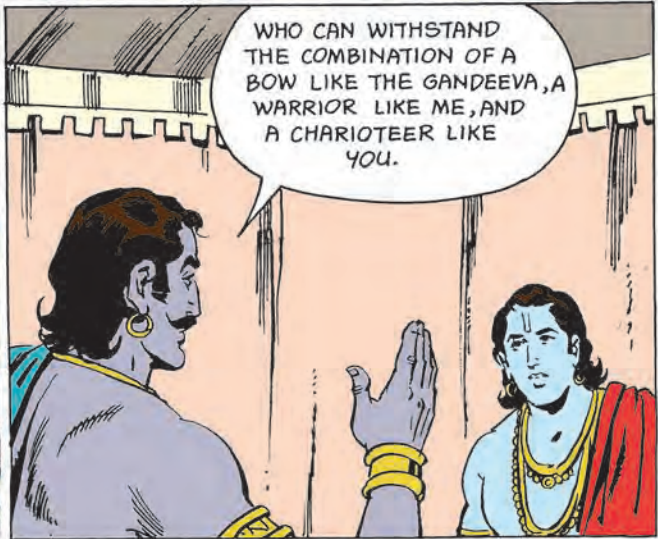
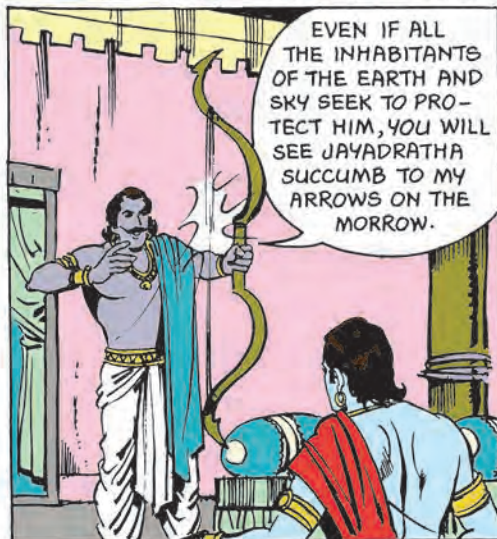
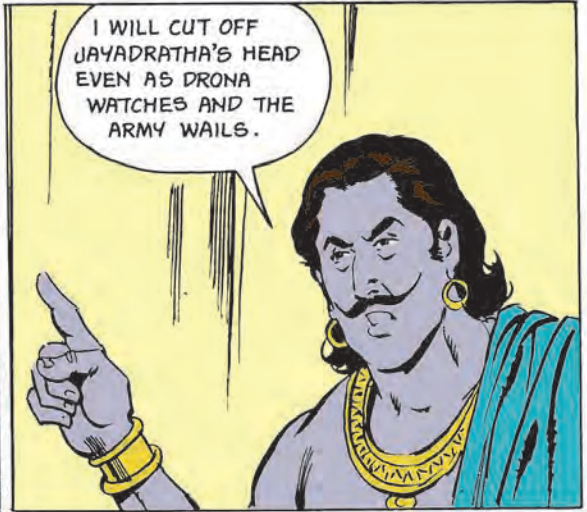
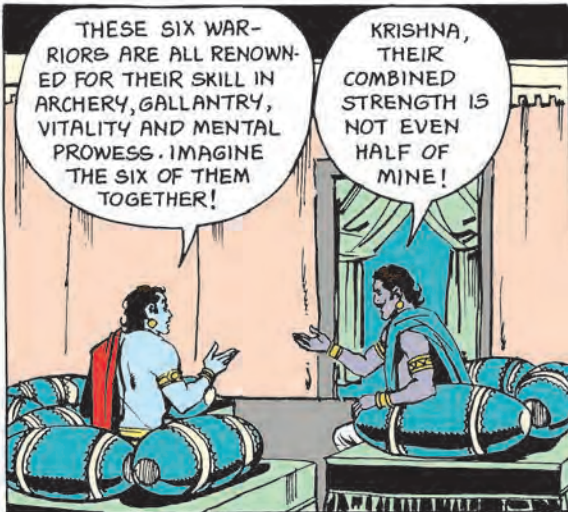
ARJUNA HAS SWORN TO KILL ME. I THINK I'LL RUN AWAY TO MY KINGDOM.





* A COMPLETE DIVISION CONSISTING OF 21870 ELEPHANTS, 21870 CHARIOTS, 65610 CĀVALRY AND 109350 INFANTRY. ** ARMY FORMATION 1061

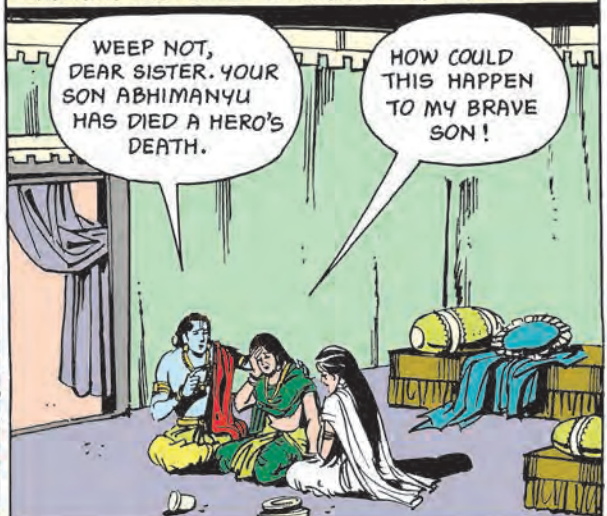




"BOTH ARJUNA AND KRISHNA SAT SILENTLY FOR A WHILE.



"KRISHNA HASTENED TO ARJUNA'S QUARTERS.



"KRISHNA PERSUADED HIS SISTER TO CONTAIN HER SORROW AND CONSOLE HER DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, UTTARA.

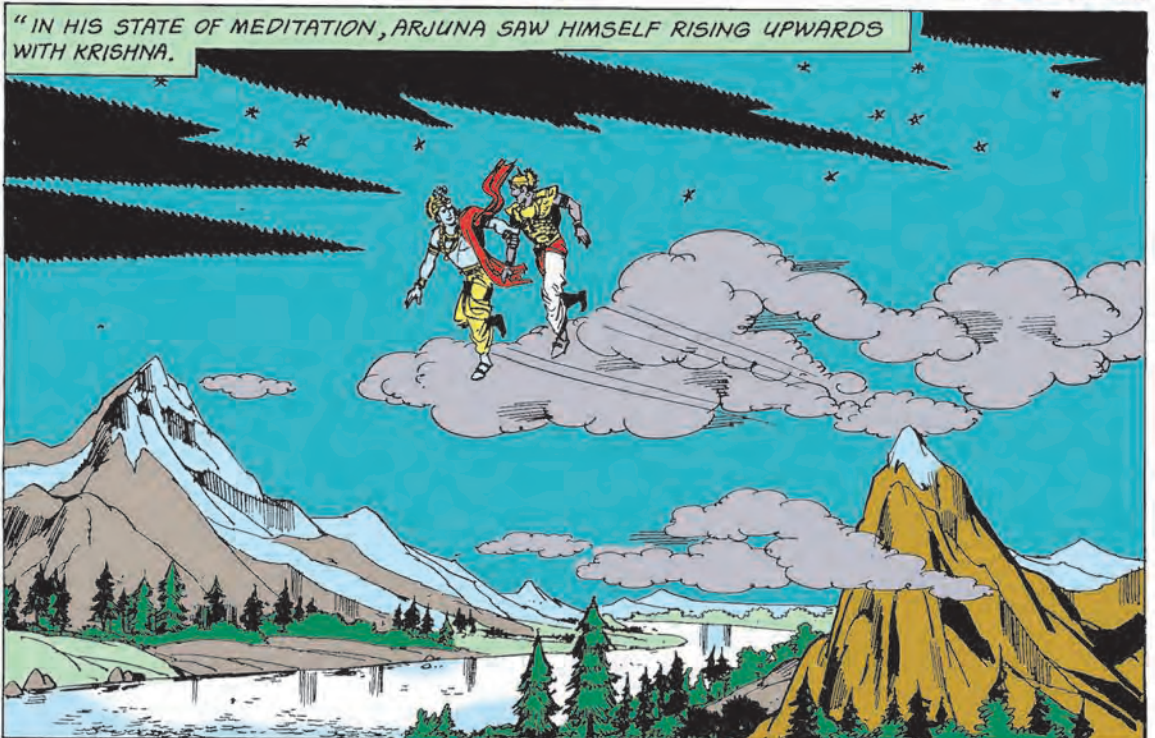


"BACK IN HIS QUARTERS, THE THOUGHT OF ARJUNA'S VOW TORMENTED HIM. HE CALLED OUT TO DARUKA AT MIDNIGHT.



"MEANWHILE ARJUNA DROIFTED INTO A FITFUL SLEEP DURING WHICH HE DREAMT OF KRISHNA.

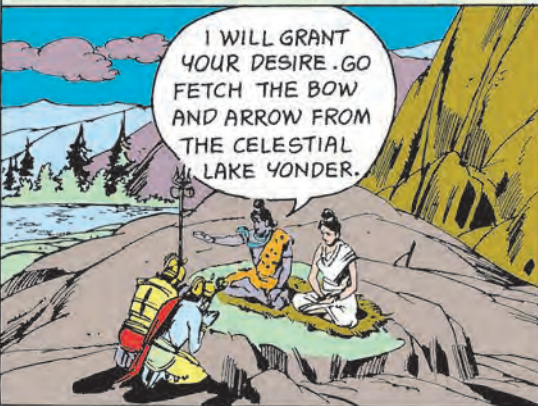




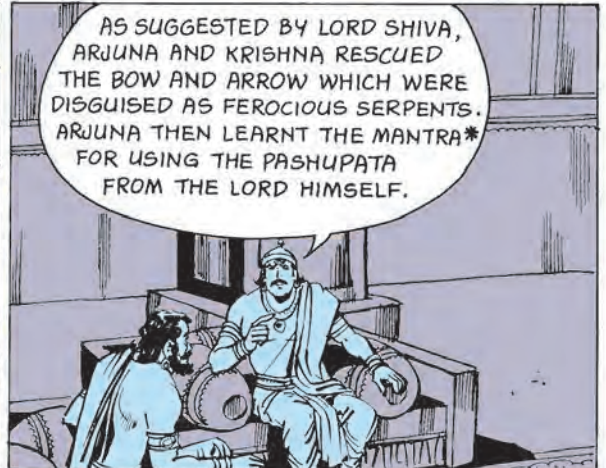
"AS THEY SPED PAST LIKE ARROWS RELEASED FROM A BOW, THEY BEHELD A GLOWING MOUNTAIN, RADIANT LIKE THE SUN. ON THE PEAK WAS SEATED LORD SHIVA.



"AFTER BOWING TO THE LORD, ARJUNA AND KRISHNA BEGAN TO PRAY TO HIM.



AS SUGGESTED BY LORD SHIVA, ARJUNA AND KRISHNA RESCUED THE BOW AND ARROW WHICH WERE DISGUISED AS FEROCIOUS SERPENTS. ARJUNA THEN LEARNT THE MANTRA* FOR USING THE PASHUPATA FROM THE LORD HIMSELF.



"THUS ARMED AND WITH GREAT ELATION IN THEIR HEARTS, ARJUNA AND KRISHNA RETURNED TO THEIR CAMP.



"THE DAWN OF THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF THE WAR FOUND THE PANDAVAS IN A HAPPY MOOD. ARJUNA SAID TO SATYAKI:



"MEANWHILE AT DAYBREAK, DRONA ARRAYED HIS TROOPS IN A COMPLEX FORMATION.



ALONG WITH SIX MIGHTY WARRIORS, ONE LAKH CAVALRY, SIXTY THOUSAND CHARIOTS, FOURTEEN THOUSAND ELEPHANTS AND TWENTY-ONE THOUSAND INFANTRY, POSITION YOURSELF AT A DISTANCE OF SIX KOSA** FROM ME, O, JAYADRATHA!

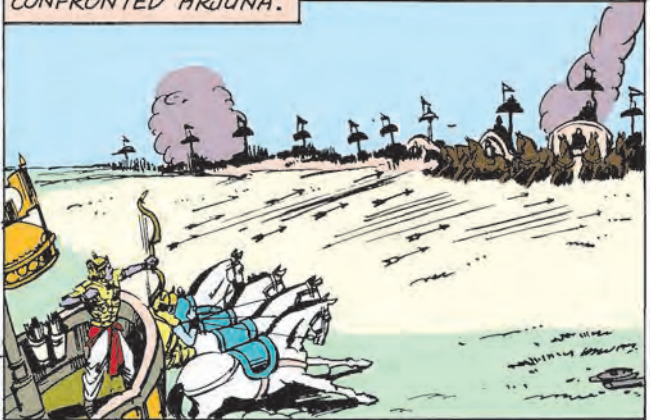


"THE TRIPLE FORMATION WAS QUITE FORMIDABLE WITH DRONA GUARDING THE LOTUS FORMATION AND DURMARSHANA STATIONED IN FRONT OF THE SHAKATAVYUHA* JUST THEN ARJUNA ARRIVED ON THE SCENE.



LEAD ME, O KRISHNA TO DURMARSHANA.

"LIKE A STRONG GALE SCATTERING CLOUDS, ARJUNA'S ARROWS DESTROYED DURMARSHANA'S FORCES. AN ENRAGED DUHSHASANA THEN CONFRONTED ARJUNA.



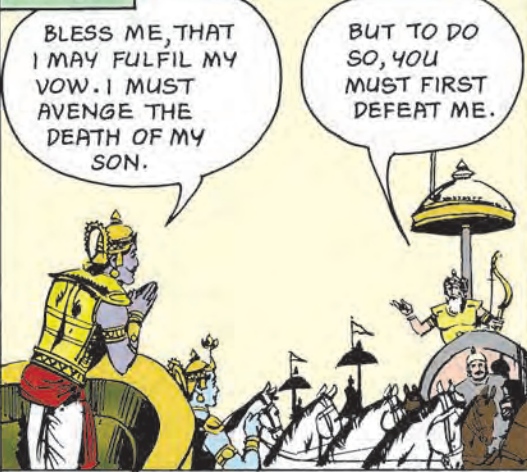
"SUCH WAS ARJUNA'S SPEED THAT NO ONE COULD MAKE OUT WHEN HE PLACED HIS ARROW, WHEN HE PULLED THE BOWSTRING AND WHEN HE RELEASED THE ARROW. THUS TORTURED, DUHSHASANA RAN FOR PROTECTION TO DRONA.



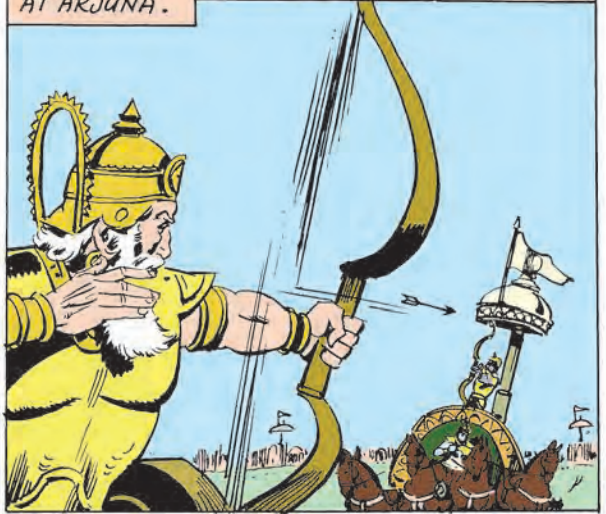
"HAVING BROKEN THROUGH THE CART FORMATION, ARJUNA SWIFTLY REACHED THE LOTUS FORMATION GUARDED BY DRONA.

BLESS ME, THAT I MAY FULFIL MY VOW. I MUST AVENGE THE DEATH OF MY SON.

BUT TO DO SO, YOU MUST FIRST DEFEAT ME.



"DETERMINED TO GUARD HIS FORMATION, DRONA DISCHARGED A SHOWER OF ARROWS AT ARJUNA.



"AN EQUALLY DETERMINED ARJUNA FOUGHT BACK. A FURIOUS BATTLE ENSUED.



"KRISHNA REALISED THAT THIS BATTLE WOULD TAKE TOO LONG. HE CAUTIONED ARJUNA —

WE CANNOT TARRY HERE ANY MORE. LET US PROCEED ONWARD.

YOU ARE RIGHT. DO WHAT YOU THINK FIT.



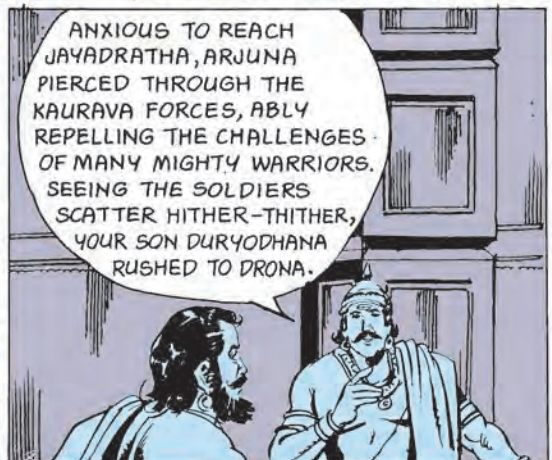
"KRISHNA DEFTLY TOOK THE CHARIOT AROUND DRONA AND RACED PAST HIM.

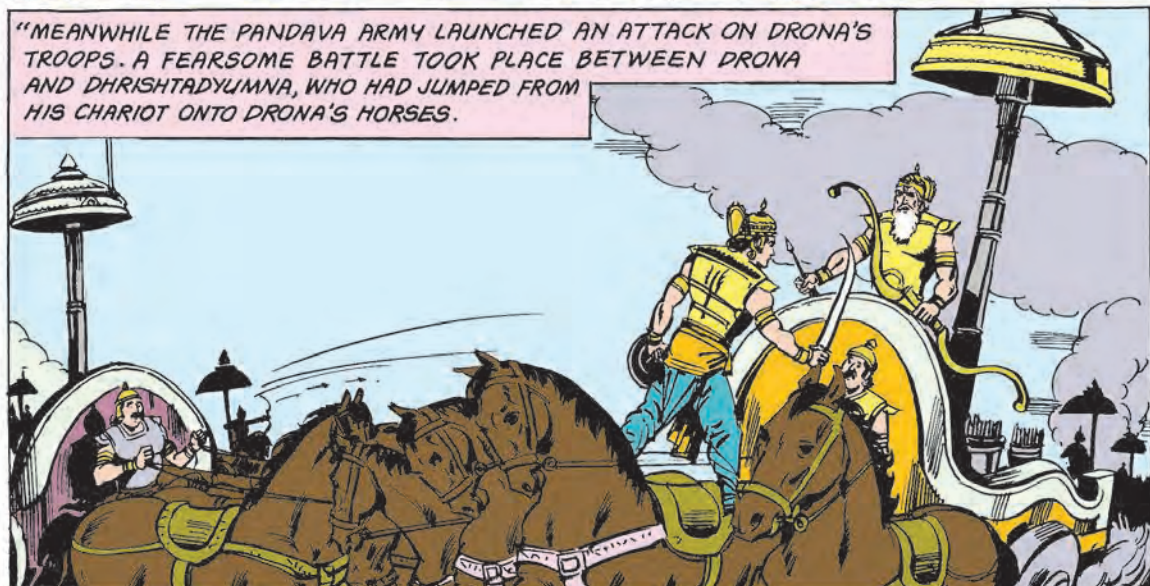
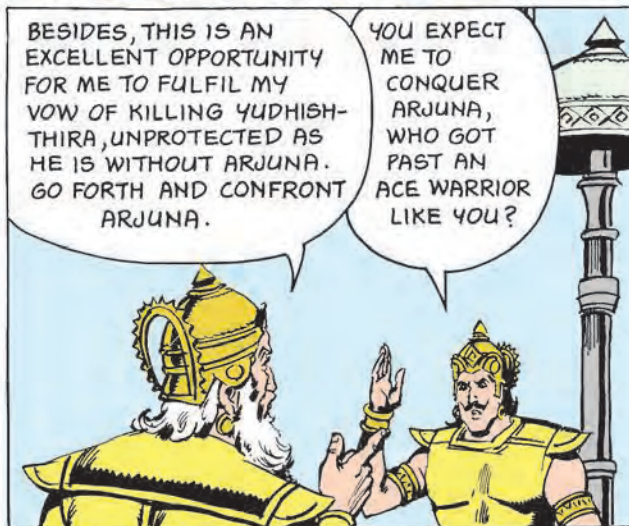
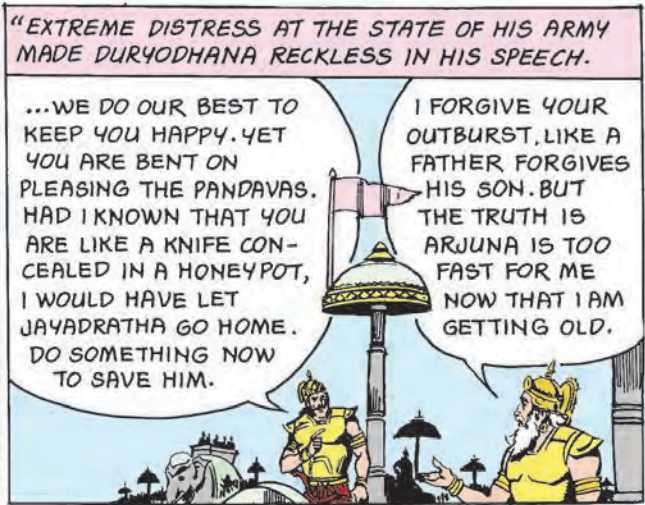
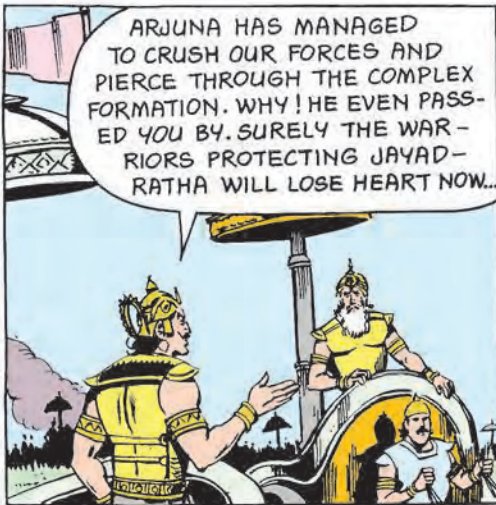
ARJUNA! NEVER BEFORE HAVE YOU GONE WITHOUT DEFEATING YOUR ENEMY.

YOU ARE MY GURU, NOT MY ENEMY.

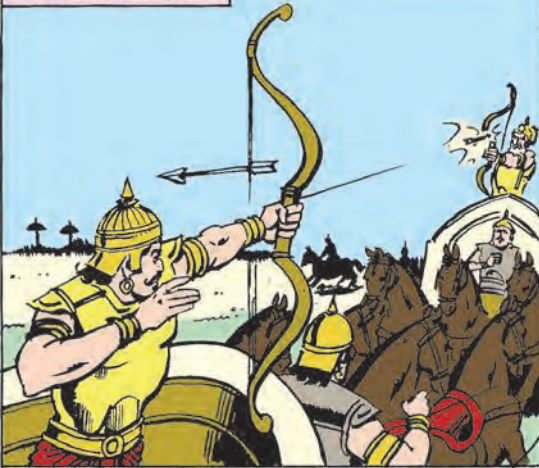


ANXIOUS TO REACH JAYADRATHA, ARJUNA PIERCED THROUGH THE KAURAVA FORCES, ABLY REPELLING THE CHALLENGES OF MANY MIGHTY WARRIORS. SEEING THE SOLDIERS SCATTER HITHER-THITHER, YOUR SON DURYODHANA RUSHED TO DRONA.





"SATYAKI INTERVENED IN TIME TO SAVE DHRISHTADYUMNA'S LIFE. HE BROKE DRONA'S BOW.



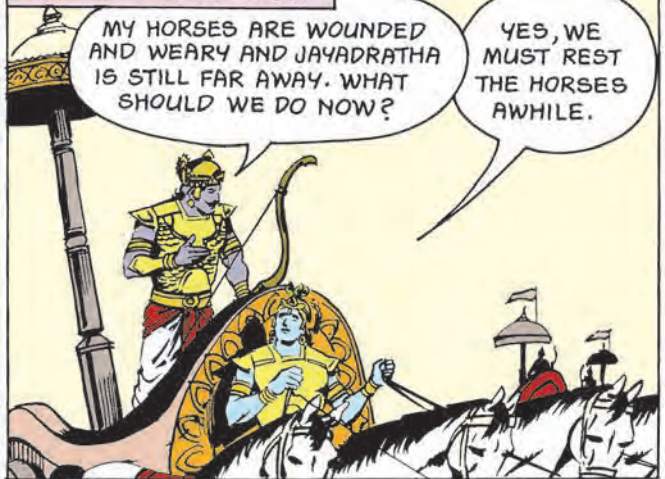
"NO SOONER DID DRONA TAKE UP A NEW BOW, THAN SATYAKI MANAGED TO CUT ITS STRING WITH HIS ARROW.



"SATYAKI MATCHED DRONA'S ONSLAUGHT. SOON, YUDHISHTHIRA, BHEEMA, NAKULA AND SAHADEVA CAME TO HIS HELP AND THE DUEL TURNED TO A GENERAL FIGHT.



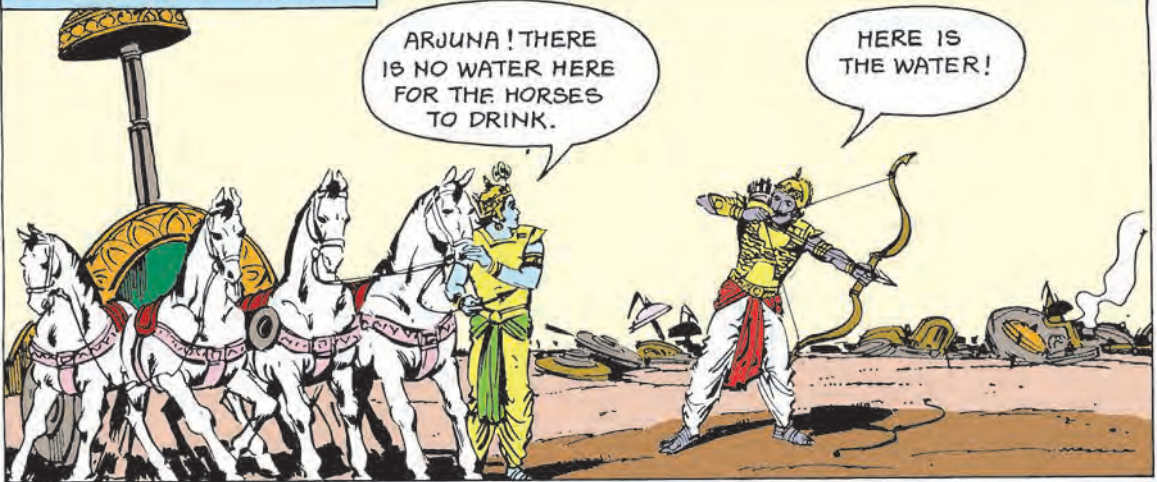
"MEANWHILE, ARJUNA WAS SPEEDING TOWARDS JAYADRATHA, CONFRONTING AND QUELLING ALL WHO CAME IN HIS WAY.



"ARJUNA LEAPT OUT OF THE CHARIOT AND BEGAN TO FIGHT ON FOOT. THE KAURAVAS THOUGHT THIS WAS AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT TO OVERCOME ARJUNA AND ATTACKED HIM FROM ALL SIDES. BUT ARJUNA, ON FOOT, WAS AS SWIFT AS HE WAS ON HIS CHARIOT.



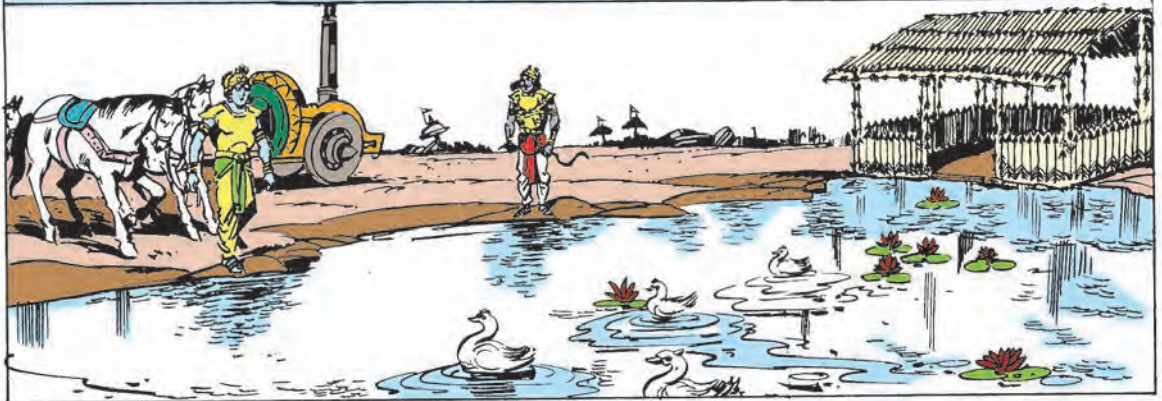
"KRISHNA, WHO WAS SOOTHING THE HORSES AND REMOVING THE ARROWS FROM THEIR BODIES, SAID TO ARJUNA :



ARJUNA ! THERE IS NO WATER HERE FOR THE HORSES TO DRINK.

HERE IS THE WATER !

"AS SOON AS HIS ARROW STRUCK THE GROUND, THERE APPEARED A PLACID POOL, WITH BEAUTIFUL LOTUSES AND WATERBIRDS ENHANCING THE VIEW. BESIDES IT, WAS A COTTAGE MADE ENTIRELY OF ARROWS TO WHICH KRISHNA LED THE HORSES. SAFE IN ITS CONFINES, HE REMOVED THEIR ARROWS, MASSAGED THEM AND QUENCHED THEIR THIRST.



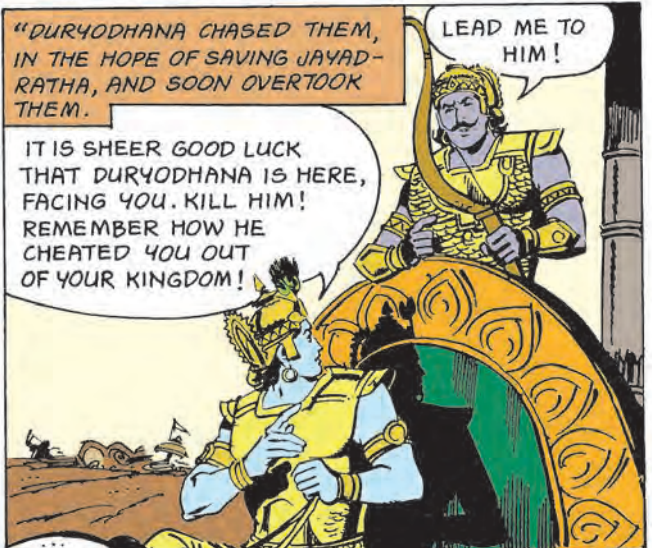
"KRISHNA THEN YOKED THE HORSES BACK TO THE CHARIOT AND RUSHED TO FULFIL THEIR MISSION.



"DURYODHANA CHASED THEM, IN THE HOPE OF SAVING JAYAD-RATHA, AND SOON OVERTOOK THEM.

IT IS SHEER GOOD LUCK THAT DURYODHANA IS HERE, FACING YOU. KILL HIM! REMEMBER HOW HE CHEATED YOU OUT OF YOUR KINGDOM!

LEAD ME TO HIM!



"HEARING KRISHNA AND ARJUNA ROAR WITH JOY, THE HEARTS OF KAURAVA SOLDIERS WERE FILLED WITH FOREBODING."

OUR KING IS DEAD.

DURYODHANA IS KILLED!



"DURYODHANA QUICKLY REASSURED HIS MEN AND CLAIMED THAT HE WOULD IN FACT KILL HIS ADVERSARIES."

COME, PARTHA! TRY ALL YOUR CELESTIAL AND EARTHLY WEAPONS ON ME.



"EVEN AS HE CHALLENGED ARJUNA, DURYODHANA HURLED TEN ARROWS AT KRISHNA'S CHEST AND SEVERAL OTHERS AT ARJUNA. ARJUNA THEN AIMED HIS POWERFUL ARROWS AT DURYODHANA, BUT..."

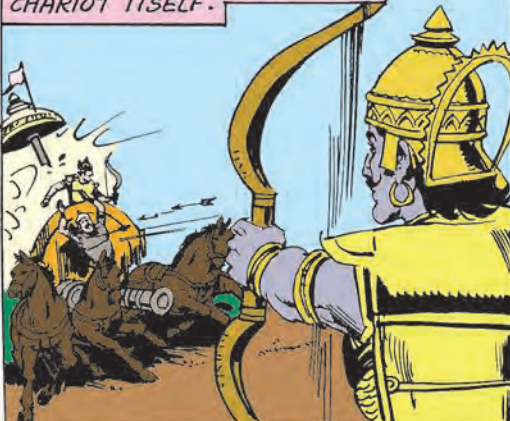
THIS IS STRANGE INDEED, ARJUNA, YOUR ARROWS ARE JUST SLIDING OFF FROM HIS BODY INSTEAD OF PIERCING IT.



I BELIEVE DRONA HAS TIED ON AN IMPENETRABLE ARMOUR ON DURYODHANA. IT WILL RESIST ALL WEAPONS. NEVERTHELESS, TODAY YOU SHALL SEE ME DEFEAT DURYODHANA.



"...WITH HIS WELL-AIMED ARROWS, ARJUNA SYSTEMATICALLY DESTROYED DURYODHANA'S HORSES, THEN HIS CHARIOTEER AND FINALLY THE CHARIOT ITSELF."



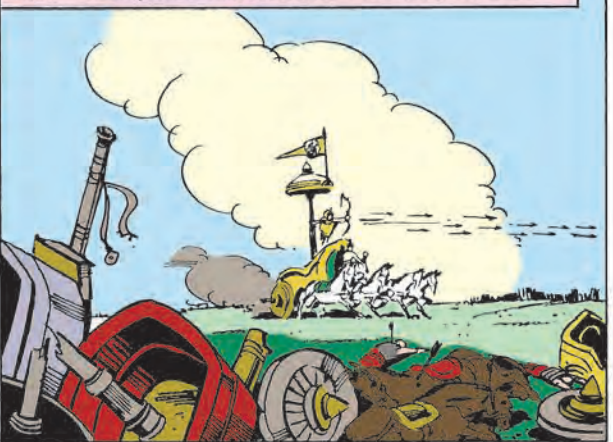
"CLEVERLY, HE AIMED HIS ARROWS UNDER DURYODHANA'S NAILS. UNABLE TO BEAR THE PAIN, DURYODHANA TOOK TO HIS HEELS."



"BUT SOON HE RETURNED, ACCOMPANIED BY EIGHT MIGHTY WARRIORS, AND SURROUNDED ARJUNA IN ORDER TO PROTECT JAYADRATHA."



"BUT ARJUNA PROVED MORE THAN A MATCH FOR THEM, AND DISPELLED THEIR FORCES."



"MEANWHILE, YUDHISHTHIRA BECAME APPREHENSIVE AT HEARING THE SOUND FROM THE KAURAVA ARMY. HE SAID TO SATYAKI —

ARJUNA, YOUR GURU AND TEACHER APPEARS TO BE IN TROUBLE. YOU MUST GO TO HIS AID.

BUT I CANNOT! ARJUNA HAS ENTRUSTED ME TO GUARD OVER YOU TODAY.



HE HAS LEFT YOU IN MY CARE. I CANNOT LEAVE YOU UNLESS I AM ASSURED OF YOUR PROTECTION.

GO TO ARJUNA. BHEEMA AND THE OTHER BROTHERS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY PROTECT ME.



"YUDHISHTHIRA ARRANGED FOR SATYAKI'S CHARIOT TO BE LOADED WITH WEAPONS AND IMPLEMENTS, AND SENT HIM AWAY."



"SATYAKI THEN FORCED HIS WAY THROUGH THE KAURAVA FORMATION, TRYING TO FOLLOW ARJUNA. BUT DRONA STOPPED HIM..."

YOUR MENTOR RAN AWAY LIKE A COWARD. UNLESS YOU TOO DECIDE TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE, YOU WILL NOT ESCAPE ALIVE TODAY.

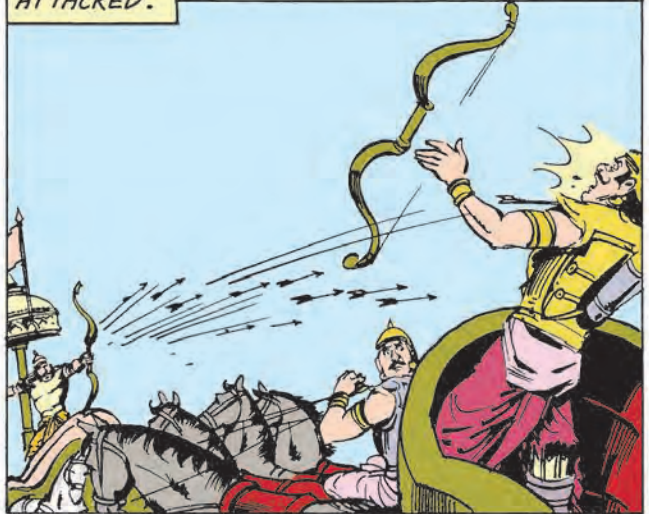
BUT A DISCIPLE MUST ALWAYS FOLLOW HIS GURU!



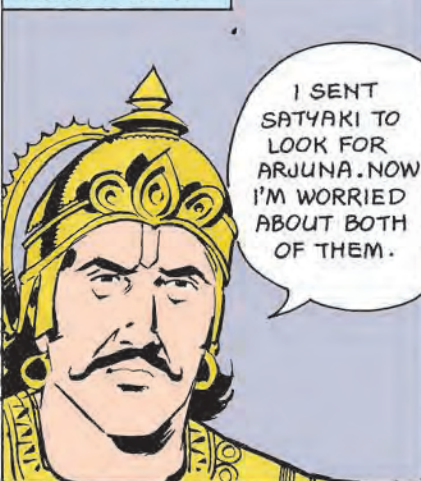
"REALISING THAT DRONA WOULD FOLLOW HIM, SATYAKI DEFTLY GUIDED HIS CHARIOTEER TO MAKE A WAY THROUGH THE VARIOUS ARMIES, CONSTITUTING THE KAURAVA FORCE.



"WHOEVER CAME IN HIS PATH, WAS RUTHLESSLY ATTACKED.



"MEANWHILE, YUDHISHTHIRA'S ANXIETY GREW.



I SENT SATYAKI TO LOOK FOR ARJUNA. NOW I'M WORRIED ABOUT BOTH OF THEM.

"NEARLY FAINT WITH WORRY, HE APPROACHED BHEEMA.



WHAT IS WRONG? NEVER BEFORE HAVE I SEEN YOU SO ANXIOUS. I'LL DO ANYTHING TO REMOVE YOUR ANXIETY.

I HEAR KRISHNA BLOWING HIS CONCH IN ANGER. SURELY ARJUNA HAS BEEN KILLED IN BATTLE.

GO AND SEEK OUT ARJUNA AND SATYAKI. I COMMAND YOU TO DO SO. SIGNAL ME, WHEN YOU DO FIND THEM SAFE, WITH YOUR LION ROAR.

DISCARD YOUR WORRY AND SORROW. I WILL DO AS YOU BID.



"BHEEMA TOO LEFT, LEAVING YUDHISHTHIRA IN DHRISTADYUMNA'S CARE —

YOU KNOW THAT DRONA WILL TRY ANYTHING TO CAPTURE YUDHISHTHIRA. PROTECTING HIM IS NOW YOUR TASK FOR THE DAY.

I WILL DO AS YOU WISH.



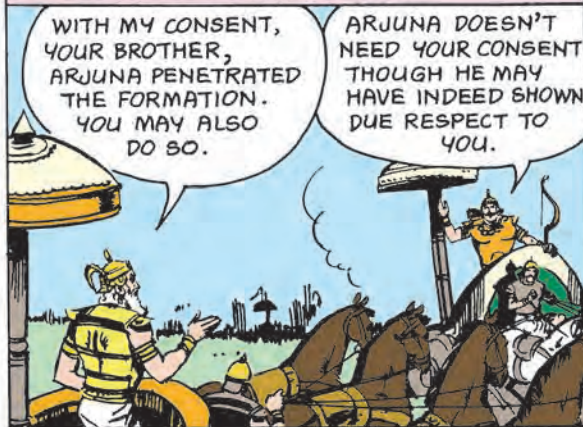
O KING! ON HIS WAY, BHEEMA WAS ACCOSTED BY YOUR SONS, BUT HE CROSSED THEIR PATH AND FELL UPON DRONA'S ARMY.



"EXPECTING BHEEMA TO PAY HIS RESPECTS BEFORE PROCEEDING, DRONA SAID —

WITH MY CONSENT, YOUR BROTHER, ARJUNA PENETRATED THE FORMATION. YOU MAY ALSO DO SO.

ARJUNA DOESN'T NEED YOUR CONSENT THOUGH HE MAY HAVE INDEED SHOWN DUE RESPECT TO YOU.



BUT I AM NOT LIKE THE KIND-HEARTED ARJUNA. I AM BHEEMASENA — YOUR ENEMY!



"BHEEMA LIFTED HIS MACE AND TWIRLED IT AT DRONA, WHO DEFTLY JUMPED OUT OF HIS CHARIOT.



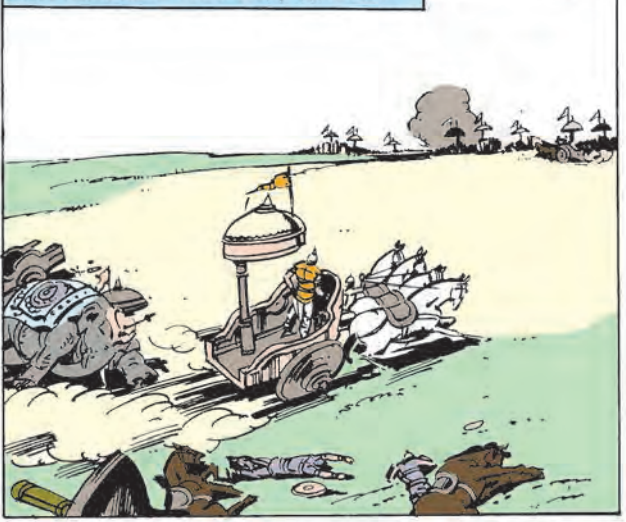
"SEVERAL WARRIOR KINGS THEN RUSHED TO SURROUND BHEEMA, BUT HE BORE THEIR ATTACK LIKE A MIGHTY MOUNTAIN.



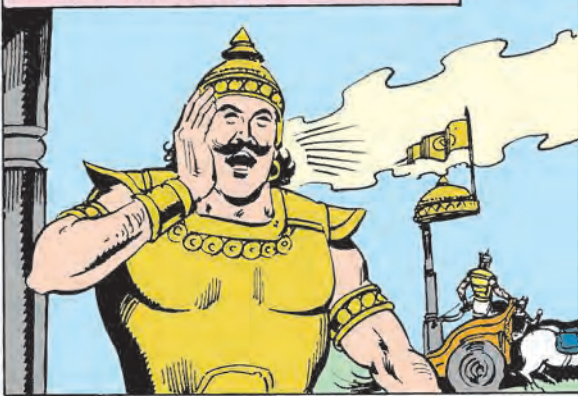
"MEANWHILE, CLIMBING ONTO ANOTHER CHARIOT, DRONA AGAIN JOINED THE FRAY. BUT BHEEMA WAS READY."



"JUST AS A MIGHTY GALE TEARS TREES ASUNDER, BHEEMA CRUSHED THE KAURAVAS AND FORGED HIS WAY AHEAD."



"AS SOON AS HE SIGHTED ARJUNA, BHEEMA ROARED LIKE A THUNDERCLOUD..."



"... WHICH WAS ECHOED BY ARJUNA AND KRISHNA. THESE FEROCIOUS SOUNDS REACHED YUDHISHTHIRA AND GLADDENED HIS HEART."



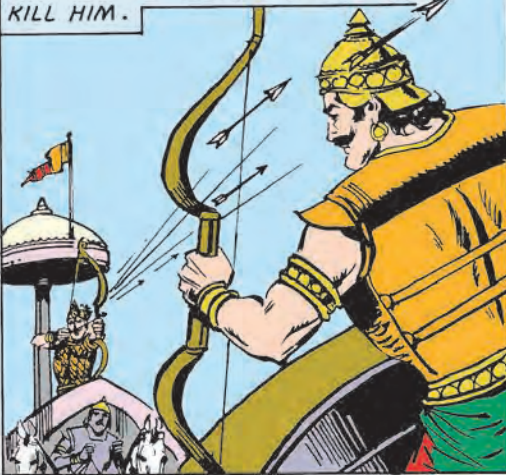
"KARNA ATTACKED BHEEMA AND THE BATTLE THAT ENSUED MADE MIGHTY WARRIORS TREMBLE WITH FEAR."



"ALTHOUGH HE EASILY DESTROYED ALL THOSE WHO CAME TO KARNA'S AID, BHEEMA REFRAINED FROM KILLING KARNA AS HE RECALLED THAT ARJUNA HAD VOWED TO DO SO."



"SIMILARLY, THOUGH KARNA REPEATEDLY MADE BHEEMA SWOON WITH HIS ARROWS, HE REMEMBERED HIS PROMISE TO KUNTI AND DID NOT KILL HIM.



"ARJUNA FINALLY DROVE KARNA AWAY WITH SNAKE-LIKE ARROWS, SHOT FROM HIS GANDEEVA.



"SEEING SATYAKI COMING TOWARDS THEM, KRISHNA SAID TO ARJUNA —



LOOK, PARTHA! HERE COMES THE FOLLOWER OF YOUR FOOTSTEPS, WHO IS BOTH A FRIEND AND A PUPIL TO YOU.

TODAY, SEEING HIM DOESN'T MAKE ME HAPPY. TODAY HE WAS TO PROTECT YUDHISHTHIRA.

"SEEING BHOORISHRAVA ATTACK SATYAKI, ARJUNA'S WORRY INCREASED.



I HAVE YET TO SLAY JAYADRATHA. BESIDES, I MUST PROTECT SATYAKI AND INQUIRE ABOUT YUDHISHTHIRA.

THE SUN IS ABOUT TO SET. I MUST ACT FAST.



"THE FIGHT BETWEEN SATYAKI AND BHOORISHRAVA PROGRESSED FROM AN ARMED COMBAT TO BAREHAND WRESTLING."



"WHEN BHOORISHRAVA YANKED SATYAKI'S HAIR, PUT HIS FOOT ON HIS CHEST AND WAS ABOUT TO CUT HIS HEAD OFF, KRISHNA BESEECHED ARJUNA—

SURELY YOU MUST SAVE HIM NOW. HE IS HERE FOR YOUR SAKE.

MY ATTENTION HAS BEEN ENTIRELY ON JAYADRATHA. BUT NOW I MUST HELP SATYAKI.



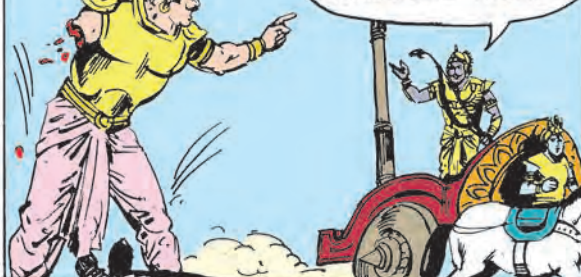
"WITH A SHARP ARROW ARJUNA AIMED AT BHOORISHRAVA'S RIGHT ARM."



"BHOORISHRAVA WAS ENRAGED."

HOW COULD YOU ATTACK ME WHILE I WAS NOT LOOKING? DOES THIS BEFIT A WARRIOR LIKE YOU?

DID YOU FOLLOW THE CODE OF CONDUCT WHEN YOU WERE ABOUT TO STAB THE WEARY, HELPLESS SATYAKI? IT WAS MY DUTY TO INTERFERE THEN.



"REALISING HIS MISTAKE, BHOORISHRAVA MADE A SEAT OF ARROWS, TOOK UP A YOGIC POSE, AND PLANNED TO GIVE UP HIS LIFE."



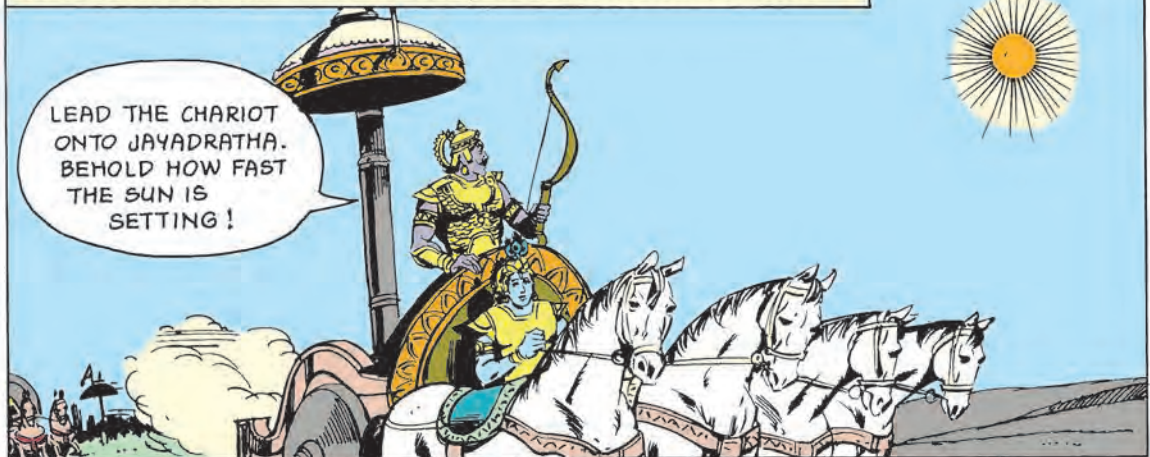
"MEANWHILE SATYAKI GAINED CONSCIOUSNESS AND ATTACKED BHOORISHRAVA."



"HIS ACTION MET WITH A SALVO OF CRITICISM FROM ALL SIDES."



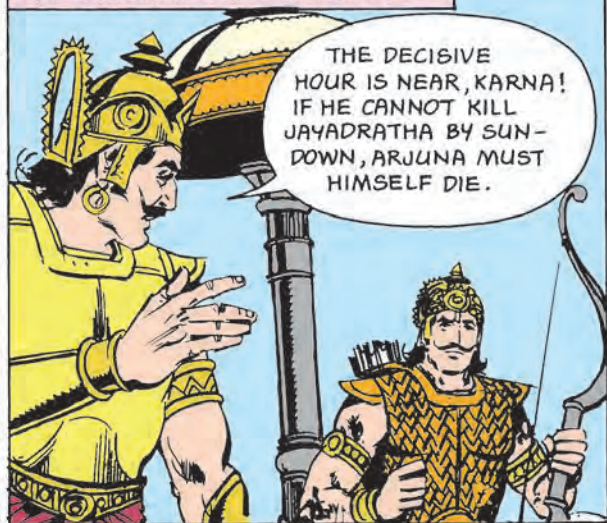
"AFTER BHOORISHRAVA WAS KILLED, ARJUNA SAID TO KRISHNA —



"SEEING THE PACE AT WHICH ARJUNA WAS APPROACHING JAYADRATHA, SEVERAL KAURAVA WARRIORS GOT READY TO REPEL HIM."



"DURYODHANA SAID TO KARNA —

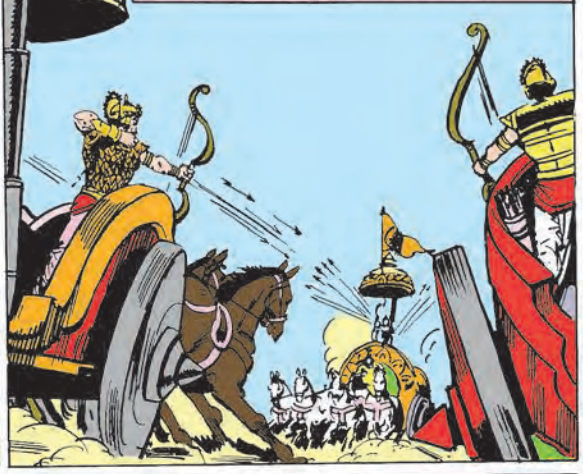




"MEANWHILE ARJUNA WAS ATTACKING THE KAURAVAS WITH ALL HIS MIGHT.



"THE KAURAVAS WERE EQUALLY BENT ON PROTECTING JAYADRATHA.



"ARJUNA AND KARNA ATTACKED EACH OTHER WITH THEIR RAPID, DESTRUCTIVE ARROWS, IN SUCH QUICK SUCCESSION THAT THEY COULD NOT EVEN SEE EACH OTHER.



"THE BATTLEFIELD LAY STREWN WITH DEAD, HEADLESS, FALLEN ELEPHANTS, WRECKED CHARIOTS AND THOUSANDS OF WOUNDED SOLDIERS TREMBLING WITH PAIN. MAKING HIS WAY THROUGH ALL THIS, ARJUNA SPED TOWARDS JAYADRATHA. HIS ARROWS CAME IN SUCH QUICK SUCCESSION THAT THEY LOOKED LIKE A HUGE FLOCK OF SWANS FLYING THROUGH THE AIR."



"AS SOON AS HE REACHED WHERE JAYADRATHA WAS, HE SHOT 64 ARROWS AT HIM AND WOUNDED HIM."



"INFURIATED, JAYADRATHA WOUNDED BOTH KRISHNA AND ARJUNA WITH HIS ARROWS AND ONE OF HIS ARROWS PIERCED THROUGH ARJUNA'S BANNER.



"ARJUNA BEHEADED JAYADRATHA'S CHARIOT-EER AND WITH ANOTHER ARROW BROUGHT DOWN JAYADRATHA'S BANNER AS WELL AS THE POST.

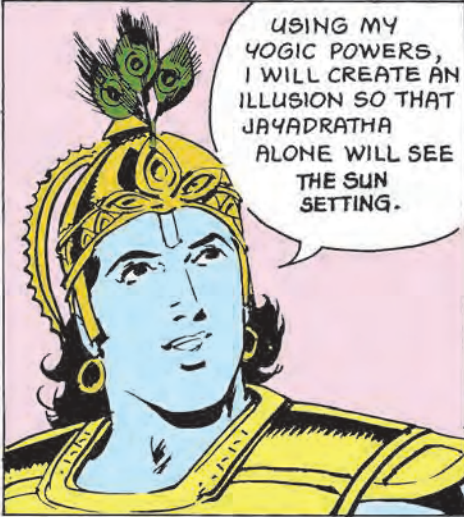


"SEEING THE COURSE OF THE SUN IN THE WEST, KRISHNA TOLD ARJUNA —

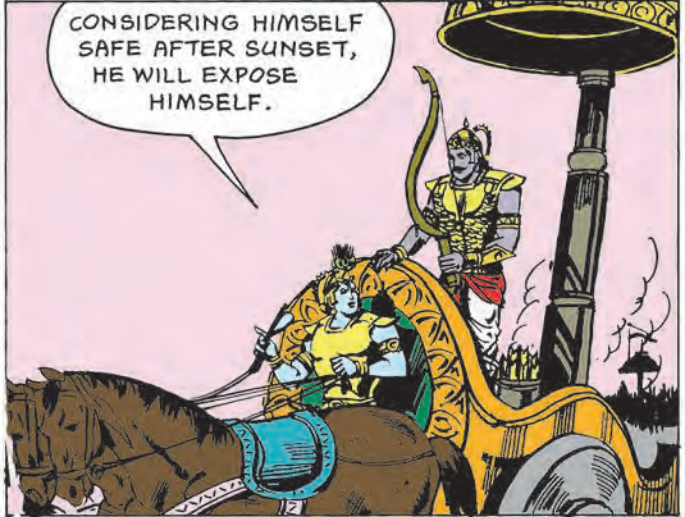


JAYADRATHA IS PROTECTED BY SIX WARRIORS YOU MUST KILL THEM FIRST.

USING MY YOGIC POWERS, I WILL CREATE AN ILLUSION SO THAT JAYADRATHA ALONE WILL SEE THE SUN SETTING.

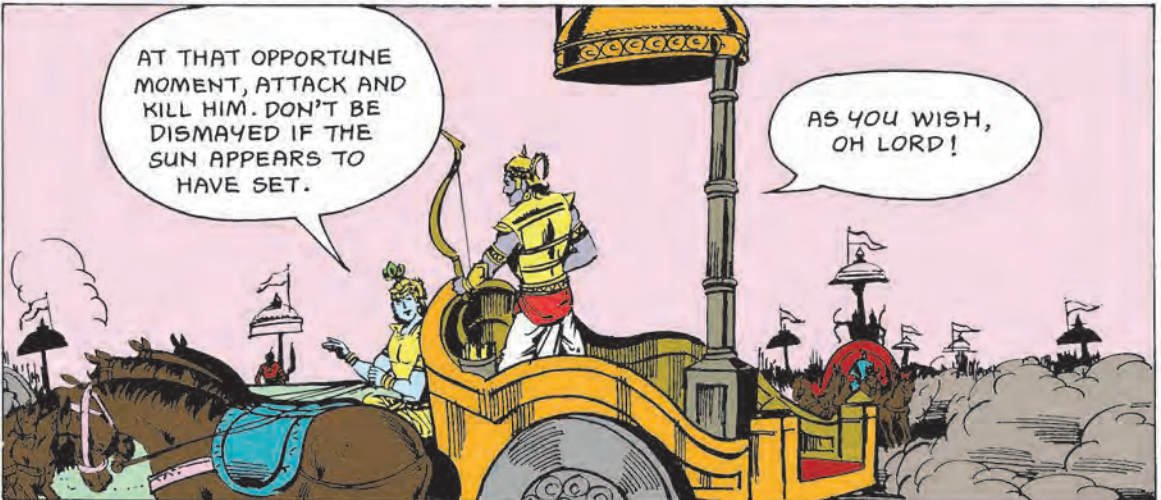


CONSIDERING HIMSELF SAFE AFTER SUNSET, HE WILL EXPOSE HIMSELF.

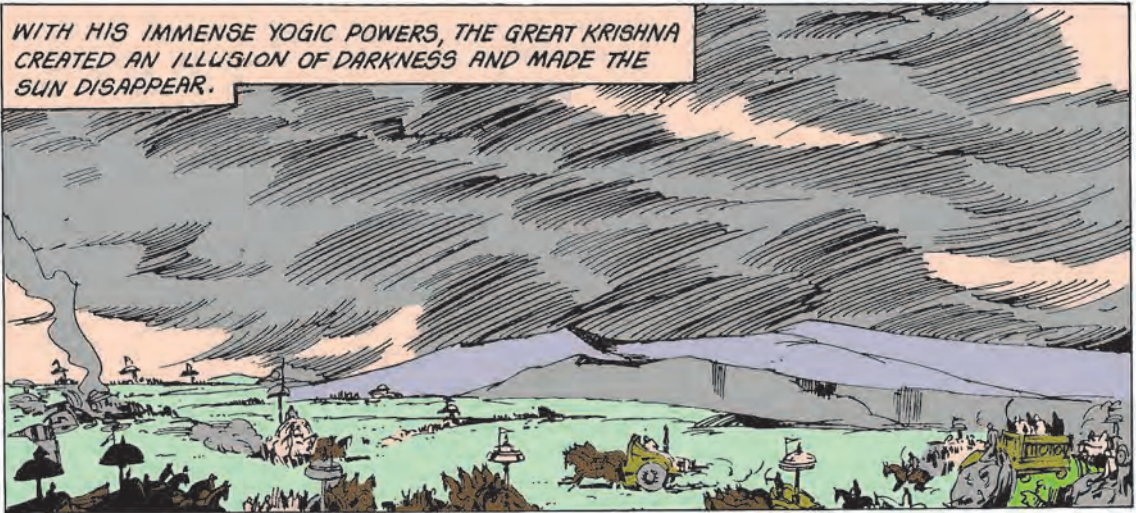


AT THAT OPPORTUNE MOMENT, ATTACK AND KILL HIM. DON'T BE DISMAYED IF THE SUN APPEARS TO HAVE SET.

AS YOU WISH, OH LORD!



WITH HIS IMMENSE YOGIC POWERS, THE GREAT KRISHNA CREATED AN ILLUSION OF DARKNESS AND MADE THE SUN DISAPPEAR.



THE KAURAVA ARMY REJOICED AT THE APPARENT SUNSET.

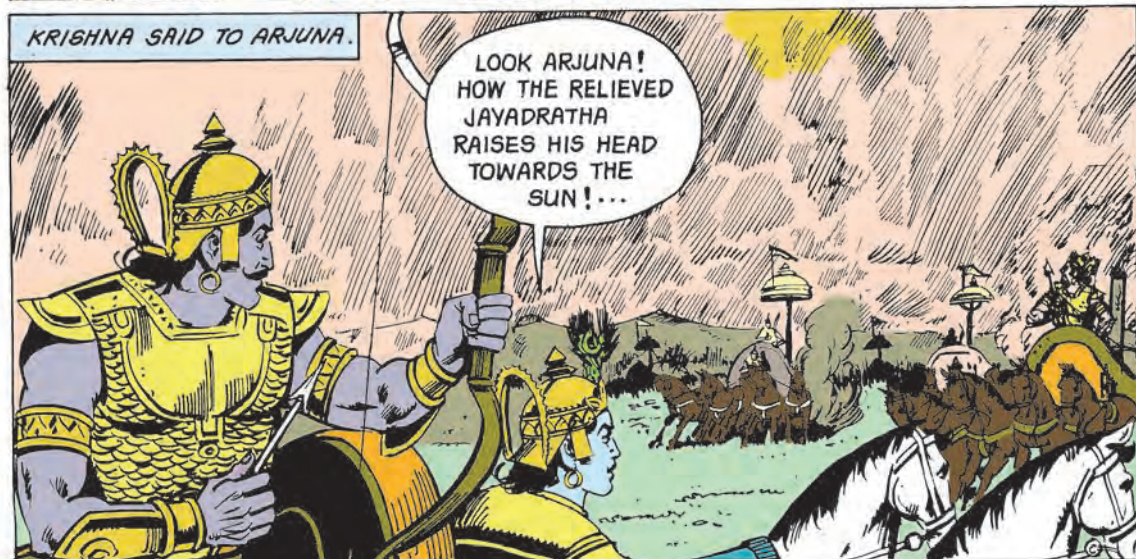


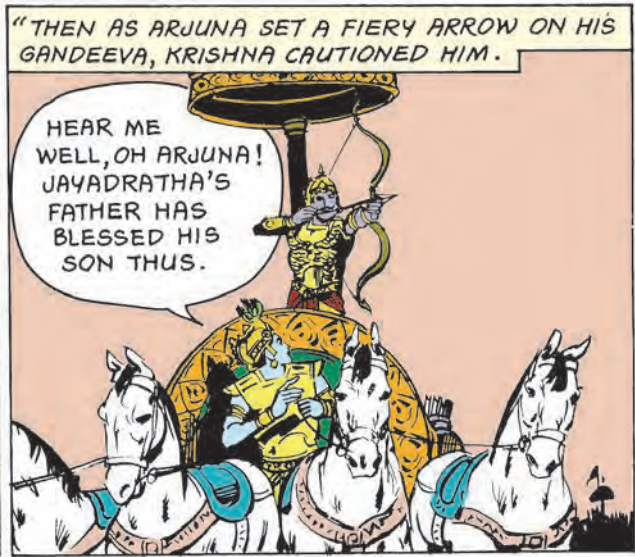
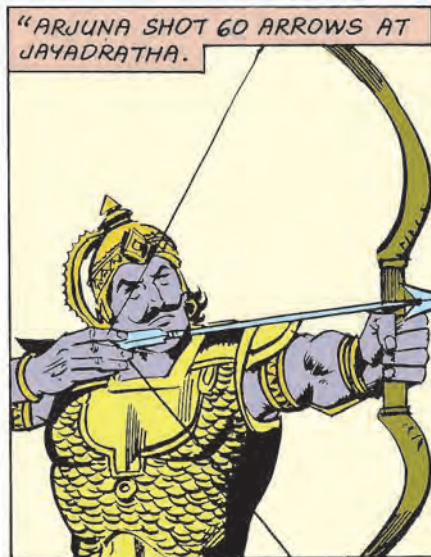
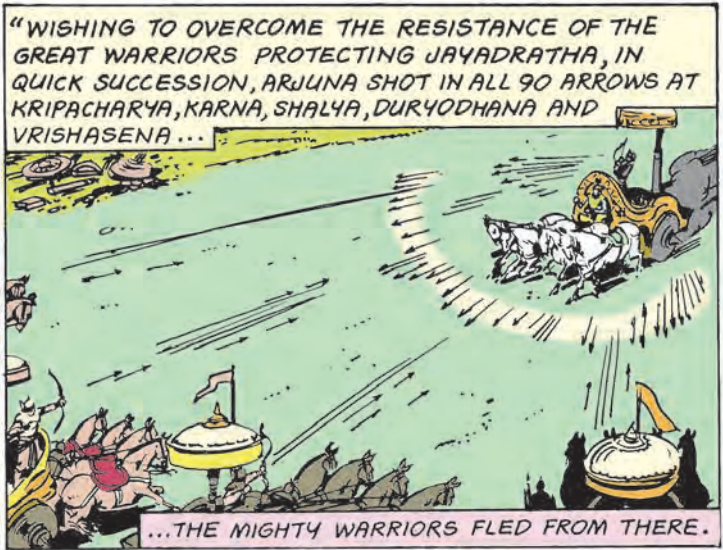
OH KING. SO ENGROSSSED WERE THEY IN CELEBRATING THE END OF THE DAY, NONE OF YOUR SOLDIERS CARED TO LOOK AT THE SUN. BUT JAYADRATHA DID SO.

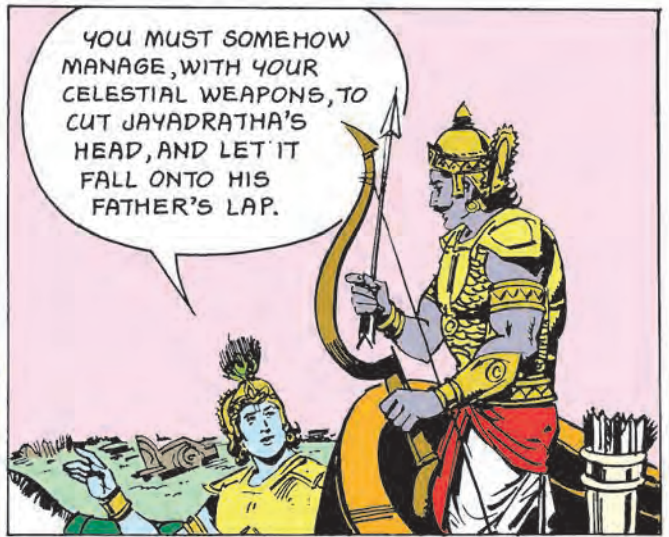


KRISHNA SAID TO ARJUNA.

LOOK ARJUNA! HOW THE RELIEVED JAYADRATHA RAISES HIS HEAD TOWARDS THE SUN!...



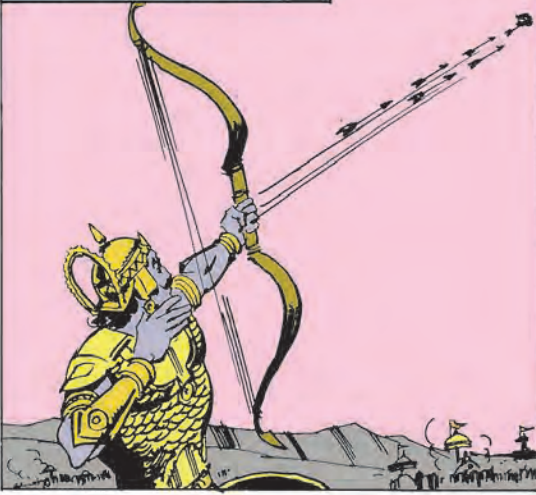




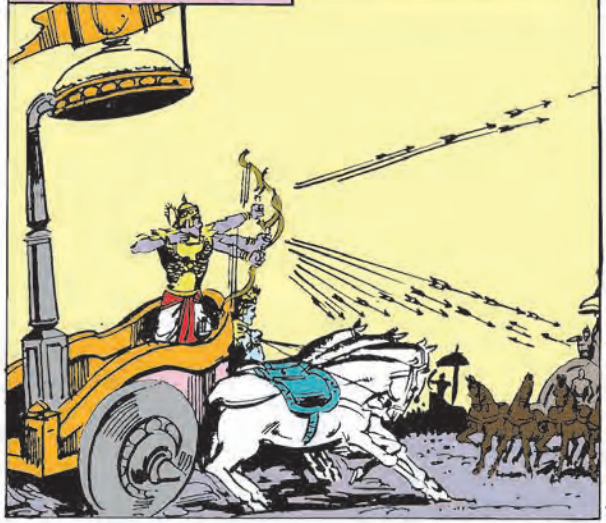
"THE ARROW SHOT OUT AND, LIKE A HAWK PICKING UP A NESTLING ATOP A TREE, CUT AND CARRIED JAYADRATHA'S HEAD SKYWARDS.



"WITH A NUMBER OF SUCCESSIVE ARROWS, ARJUNA SENT THE HEAD HIGHER AND HIGHER..."



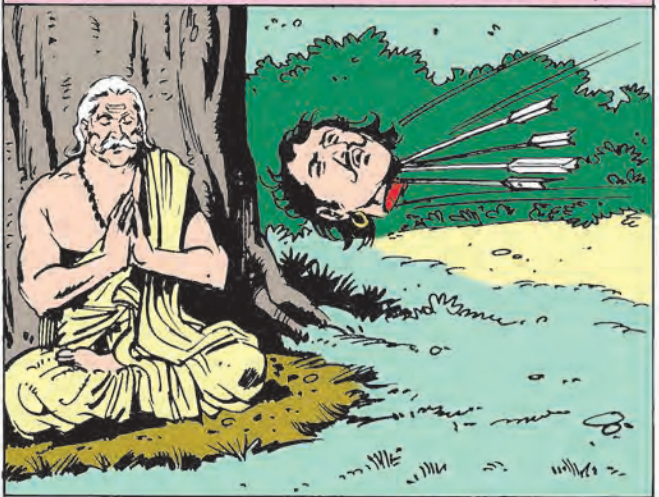
"... WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY FIGHTING SIX MIGHTY WARRIORS."



"THE ARROWS CARRIED THE HEAD TO THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE BATTLEFIELD ..."



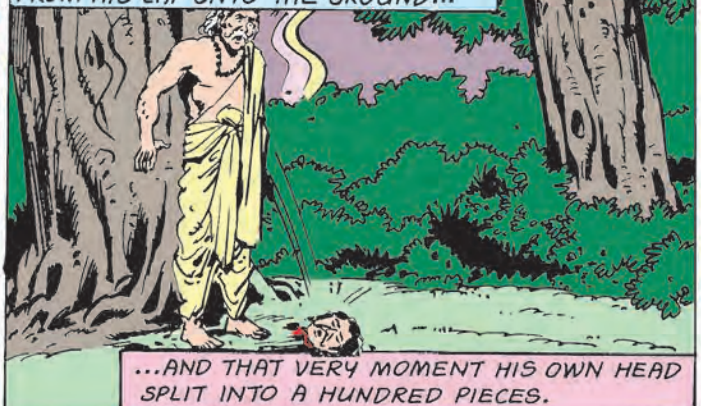
"... WHERE JAYADRATHA'S FATHER SAT IN PENANCE."



"HE WAS OFFERING HIS EVENING PRAYERS TO THE SUN, WHEN THE HEAD OF HIS SON FELL ON HIS LAP."



"UNAWARE OF ITS PRESENCE, WHEN HE GOT UP AFTER COMPLETING HIS PRAYER, THE HEAD FELL FROM HIS LAP ONTO THE GROUND..."



"... AND THAT VERY MOMENT HIS OWN HEAD SPLIT INTO A HUNDRED PIECES."

"SURPRISED AT THIS TURN OF EVENTS, THE SOLDIERS BEGAN TO PRAISE ARJUNA AND KRISHNA."



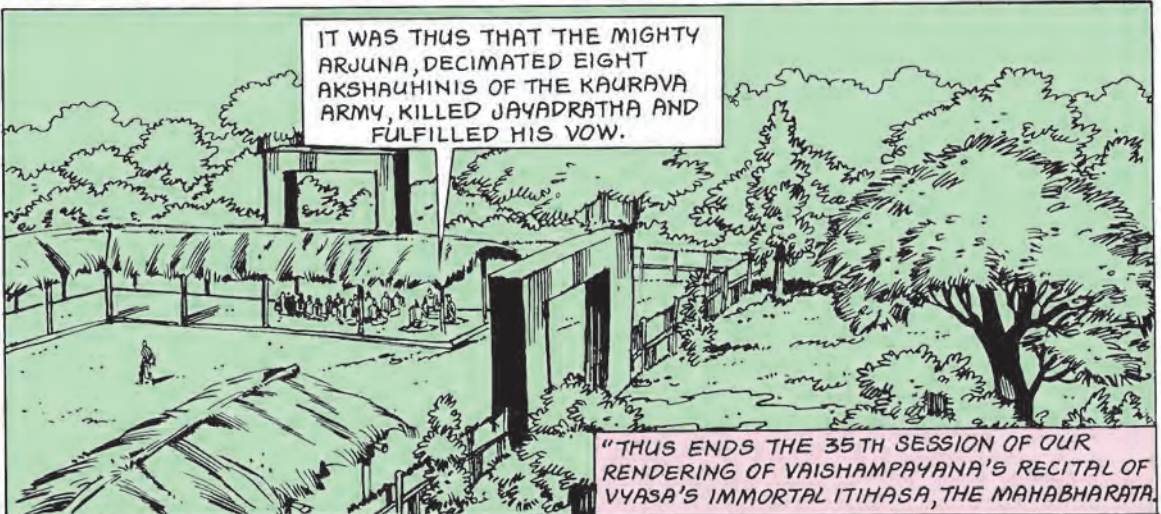
THEREUPON, O KING, AFTER JAYADRATHA WAS THUS SLAIN, KRISHNA DISPELLED THE ILLUSION OF DARKNESS.



"IT WAS THEN THAT THE KAURAVAS REALISED THAT THEY HAD BEEN TAKEN IN BY THE ILLUSION OF DARKNESS CREATED BY KRISHNA."



IT WAS THUS THAT THE MIGHTY ARJUNA, DECIMATED EIGHT AKSHAUHNIS OF THE KAURAVA ARMY, KILLED JAYADRATHA AND FULFILLED HIS VOW.

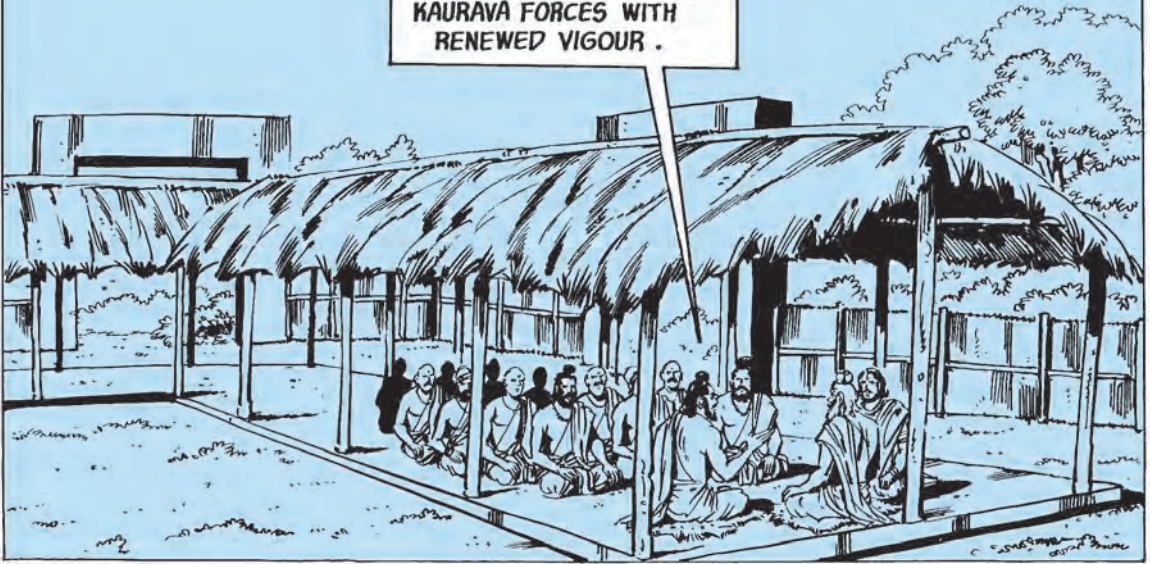


"THUS ENDS THE 35TH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL OF VYASA'S IMMORTAL ITIHASA, THE MAHABHARATA."

Mahabharata - 36

THE BATTLE AT MIDNIGHT

AFTER FULFILLING HIS VOW TO KILL JAYADRATHA BEFORE SUNDOWN, ARJUNA BEGAN TO ATTACK THE KAURAVA FORCES WITH RENEWED VIGOUR.



"ANXIOUS TO LEARN THE DETAILS OF THE BATTLE, THE BLIND PATRIARCH DHRITARASHTRA ASKED SANJAYA -

HOW DID MY SONS REACT TO THE SLAYING OF JAYADRATHA?

THEY COULD NOT CONTAIN THEIR ANGER...



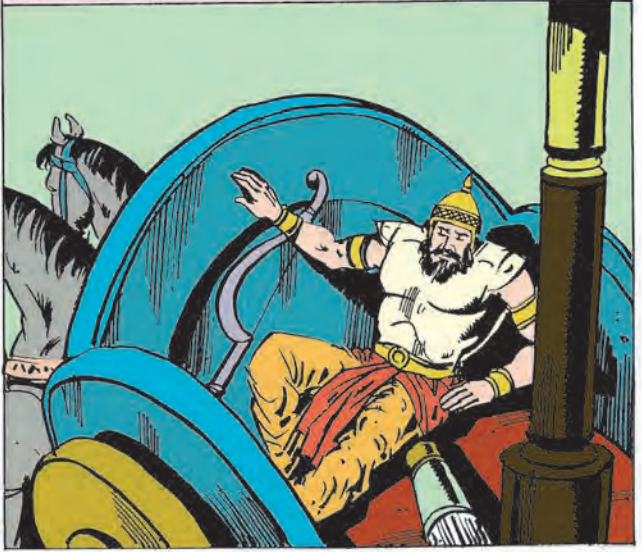
"...INFURIATED BY THE KILLING OF JAYADRATHA, KRIPACHARYA AND ASHWATTHAMA ATTACKED ARJUNA...



"RELUCTANT TO ATTACK HIS GURU ,
ARJUNA USED THE MILDEST OF
ARROWS ...



"...BUT SO NUMEROUS WERE THEY THAT THEY
RENDERED KRIPACHARYA UNCONSCIOUS .



" ARJUNA THOUGHT THAT
KRIPACHARYA WAS DEAD .HE WAS
SMITTEN WITH GUILT .

WOE BETIDE ME !
I HAVE KILLED
MY OWN
GURU !

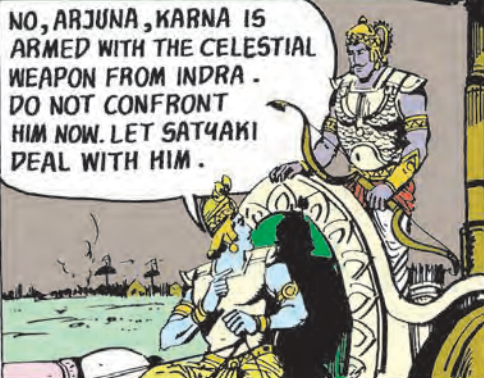


" KARNA SEIZED THE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTACK THE
REPENTANT ARJUNA . SATYAKI AND OTHER WARRIORS
RUSHED TO CONFRONT HIM .

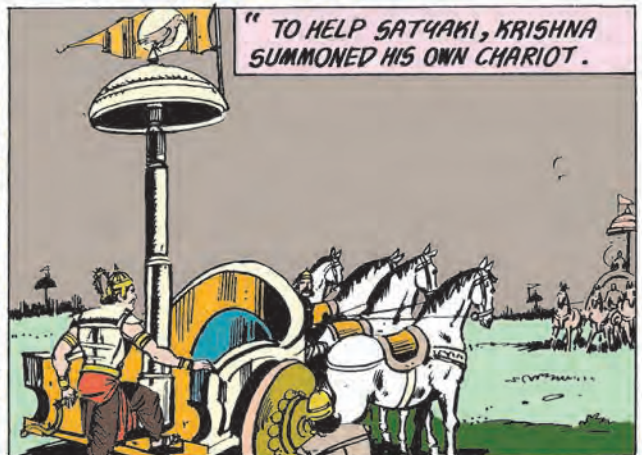


" KRISHNA HOWEVER PREVENTED
ARJUNA FROM FIGHTING WITH KARNA .

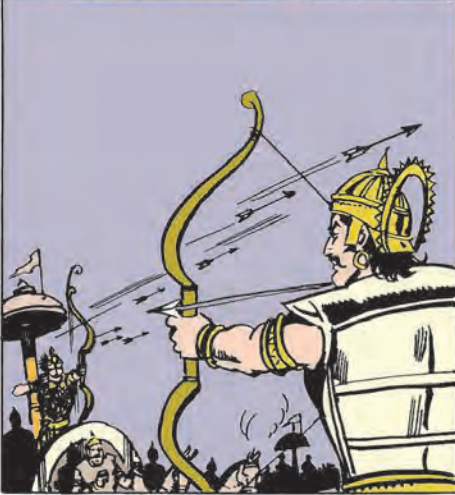
NO, ARJUNA , KARNA IS
ARMED WITH THE CELESTIAL
WEAPON FROM INDRA .
DO NOT CONFRONT
HIM NOW. LET SATYAKI
DEAL WITH HIM .



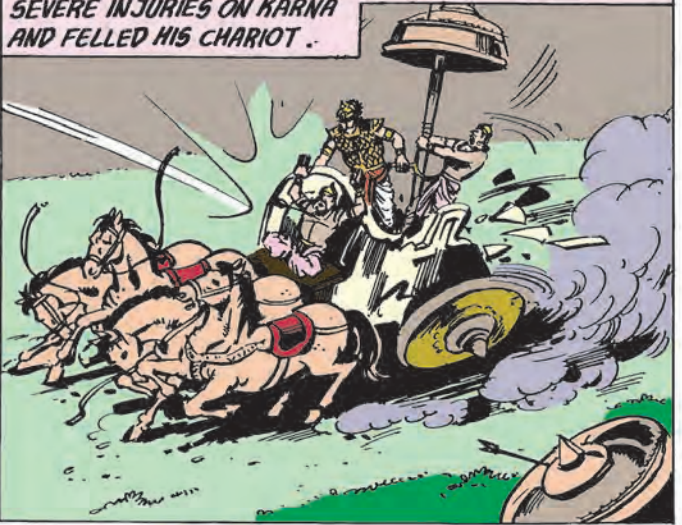
" TO HELP SATYAKI, KRISHNA
SUMMONED HIS OWN CHARIOT .



"A FEARFUL BATTLE ENSUED BETWEEN SATYAKI AND KARNA .



"WITH SHARP IRON ARROWS SATYAKI INFLICTED SEVERE INJURIES ON KARNA AND FELLED HIS CHARIOT .



THEN HE REMEMBERED ARJUNA'S VOW TO KILL KARNA . HE THEREFORE SPARED KARNA'S LIFE .



"AS THE SUN BEGAN TO SET, KRISHNA AND ARJUNA PROCEEDED TO MEET YUDHISHTHIRA .

ARJUNA HAS FULFILLED HIS VOW . JAYADRATHA IS DEAD !

YOUR WORDS FILL MY HEART WITH JOY .



YUDHISHTHIRA SAID TO KRISHNA -

IT IS YOU WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR ARJUNA TO FULFIL HIS VOW, O LORD OF THE UNIVERSE !

NO YUDHISHTHIRA , YOUR AUSTERITIES AND RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT AND ARJUNA'S SKILL AS A MATCHLESS WARRIOR ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS VICTORY .



"JAYADRATHA'S DEATH HAD BROKEN DURYODHANA'S SPIRIT .

I AM NOW CONVINCED THAT NONE CAN EQUAL ARJUNA'S PROWESS .



"HE THEN WENT TO DRONA -

HOW MANY KINGS HAVE GIVEN UP THEIR LIVES FOR ME ! EVEN THE INVINCIBLE BHEESHMA IS LYING SUPINE IN THE BATTLE-FIELD . SEVEN DIVISIONS OF OUR ARMY ARE DESTROYED .

I HAVE ALWAYS TOLD YOU THAT ARJUNA IS INVINCIBLE . HE COULD KILL JAYADRATHA IN SPITE OF 50 MANY OF YOU STRIVING HARD TO PROTECT HIM . YET , I ASSURE YOU , YOU WILL NOT FIND ME WANTING IN MY EFFORTS . TILL I KILL ALL THE PANDAVAS , I WILL NOT TAKE OFF MY ARMOUR .



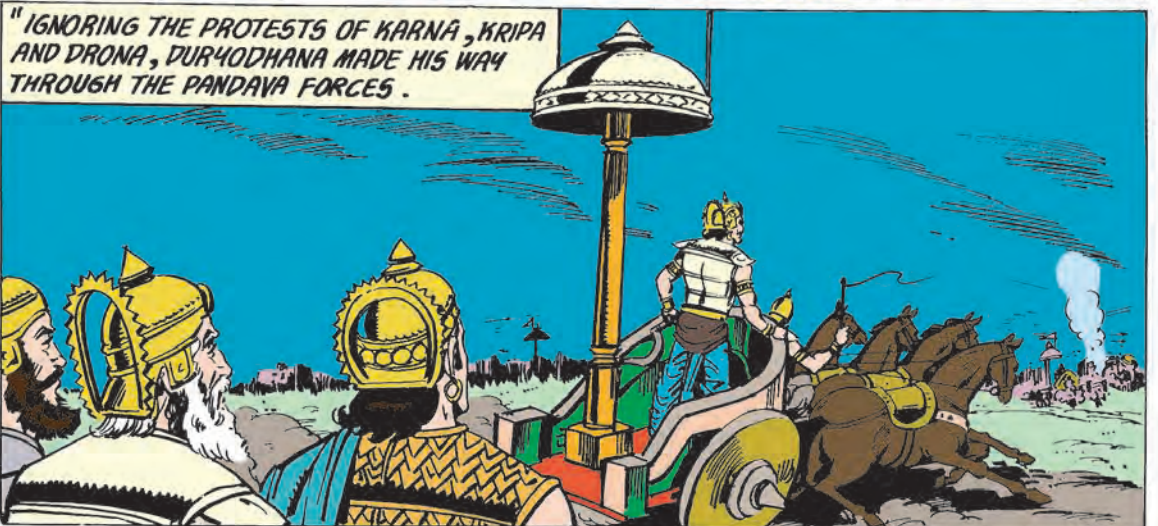
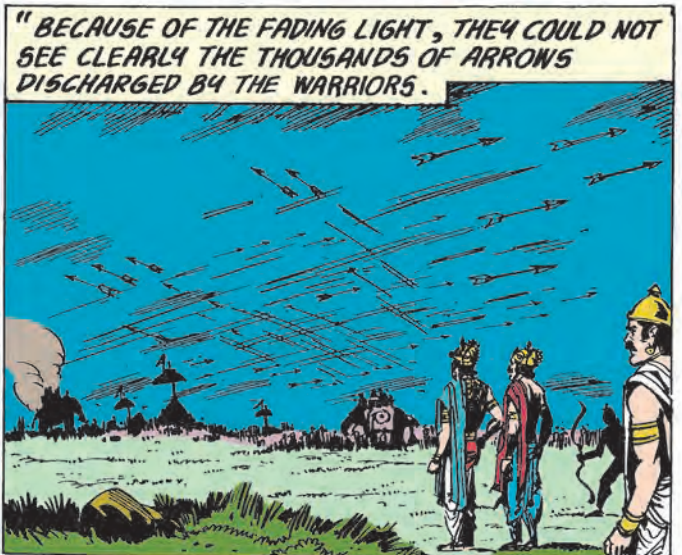
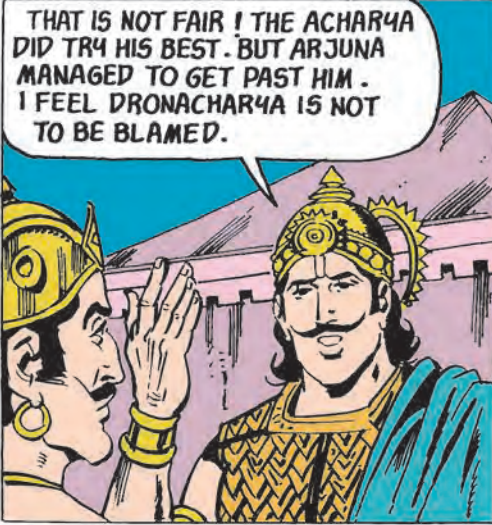
I WILL PENETRATE THE ENEMY FORCES . MEANWHILE PROTECT YOUR MEN , FOR TODAY THE BATTLE MAY CONTINUE INTO THE NIGHT .



"AS THEY WALKED TOWARDS THE BATTLEFIELD , DURYODHANA CONFIDED IN KARNA -

DRONA HAD PROMISED TO PROTECT JAYADRATHA , BUT HE ALLOWED ARJUNA TO GO PAST HIM . AFTER ALL , ARJUNA HAS ALWAYS BEEN HIS FAVOURITE PUPIL .





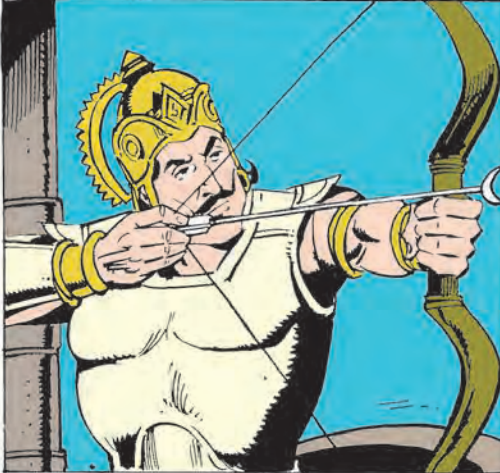
"AS THE MORNING SUN DISPELS THE DARKNESS, DURYODHANA DESTROYED MANY PANDAVA SOLDIERS.



"JUST THEN YUDHISHTHIRA CHARGED TOWARDS HIM.



"AND THE TWO WERE LOCKED IN COMBAT.



"WITH HIS POWERFUL ARROWS, DURYODHANA INFLECTED INJURIES ON YUDHISHTHIRA, HIS CHARIOTEER AND ALL THE FOUR HORSES.



"DURYODHANA WAS ALSO SERIOUSLY INJURED BY YUDHISHTHIRA'S BARRAGE OF ARROWS AND HE SAT DOWN IN THE CHARIOT.



SOON THE DUEL TURNED INTO A GENERAL FIGHT.



"AS THE MIGHTY WARRIORS LIKE NAKULA, SAHADEVA AND VIRATA ATTACKED DRONA WITH THEIR ARMIES ...



"THE NIGHT TURNED DARK AND OMINOUS ENOUGH TO PUT FEAR IN THE HEARTS OF THE BRAVEST OF WARRIORS .



THE SILENCE OF THE NIGHT WAS BROKEN BY THE PIERCING SOUND FROM BUGLES, THE TRUMPETING OF ELEPHANTS, THE NEIGHING OF HORSES AND THE HOWLING OF JACKALS.



"BHEEMA WENT ABOUT ATTACKING DHRITARASHTRA'S SONS WITH SLAPS AND BLOWS USING HIS BARE HANDS .



MEANWHILE SOMADATTA ATTACKED SATYAKI TO AVENGE THE DEATH OF HIS SON, BHOORISHRAVA .



"HE SAID TO SATYAKI - HOW COULD YOU ATTACK MY SON WHEN HE WAS UNARMED ?

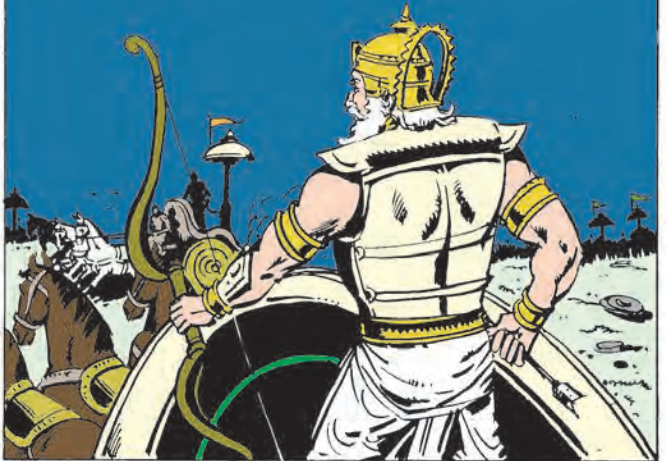
SO WHAT ! AND NOW I WILL KILL YOU TOO .



"SOMADATTA FAINTED AS A RESULT OF SATYAKI'S ATTACK AND HAD TO BE CARRIED AWAY .



"SEEING THIS , AN ENRAGED DRONA RUSHED TOWARDS SATYAKI .



"SO FURIOUS WAS HE THAT ANYONE WHO COME IN HIS WAY WAS INSTANTLY KILLED .



"ARJUNA THEN SAID TO KRISHNA -

PLEASE DRIVE ME TOWARDS DRONA .



"BHEEMA TOO FOLLOWED .



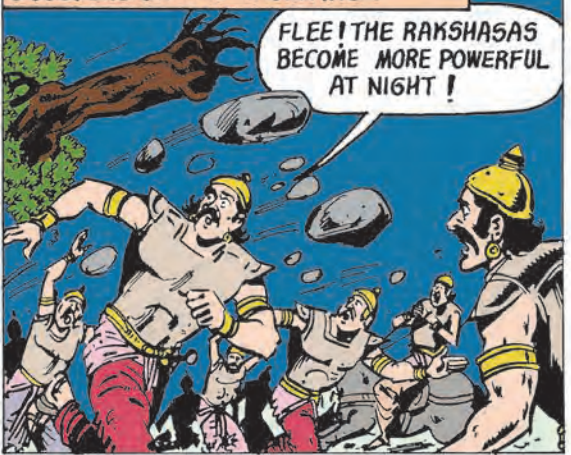
"JUST THEN GHATOTKACHA , BHEEMA 'S SON , APPEARED ON THE SCENE .



" HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY HIS ARMY OF RAKSHASAS* HIS ROAR MADE EVEN THE ELEPHANTS TREMBLE WITH FEAR .



" HIS VERY SIGHT FRIGHTENED THE ENEMY FORCES, HIS ARMY STARTED RAINING BOULDERS ON THE KAURAVAS .



" GHATOTKACHA WITH HIS MAGICAL POWERS CREATED AN AWESOME ILLUSION . WHILE OTHERS FLED IN FEAR, ASHWATTHAMA ALONE WAS UNDAUNTED ...



... AND HE DESTROYED THE ILLUSION. THE ENRAGED GHATOTKACHA, SMITTEN BY THE ARROWS OF ASHWATTHAMA...

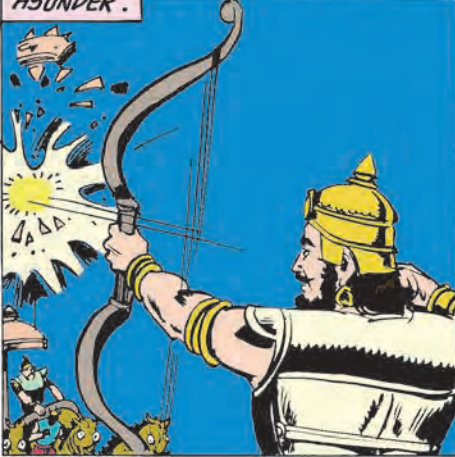


... TOOK UP A CHAKRA** AND HURLED IT AT ASHWATTHAMA .



* DEMONS . ** DISC .

"WITH HIS WELL-AIMED ARROWS, ASHWATTHAMA NIMBLY CAST IT ASUNDER."



"GHATOTKACHA'S SON NOW JOINED THE FIGHT, ALSO USING MAGIC."



"BUT HE SOON SUCCEMPTED TO ASHWATTHAMA'S ARROWS. GHATOTKACHA WAS FURIOUS."

ASHWATTHAMA, JUST WAIT! YOU CANNOT ESCAPE ALIVE TODAY!

OH! GO AND FIGHT WITH SOMEONE ELSE. DO NOT IRRITATE ME OR ELSE ...



"GHATOTKACHA TRIED VARIOUS TRICKS AND CREATED ILLUSION AFTER ILLUSION TO SCARE ASHWATTHAMA."



"A CALM AND COLLECTED ASHWATTHAMA ASSURED THE WORRIED DURYODHANA."

LEAVE THIS TO ME, O KING! GO AND REASSURE YOUR SOLDIERS.



WITH AN ARROW THAT RESEMBLED THE MACE OF YAMA* ASHWATTHAMA WOUNDED GHATOTKACHA, WHO FELL TO THE GROUND.



* GOD OF DEATH

"MANY KINGS IN THE PANDAVA ARMY FELT THAT GHATOTKACHA HAD BEEN KILLED, AND LOST THE WILL TO FIGHT. BHEEMA THEN ATTACKED THE KAURAVA ARMY WITH RENEWED VIGOUR."



"SANJAYA NARRATED THE GRUESOME DETAILS."

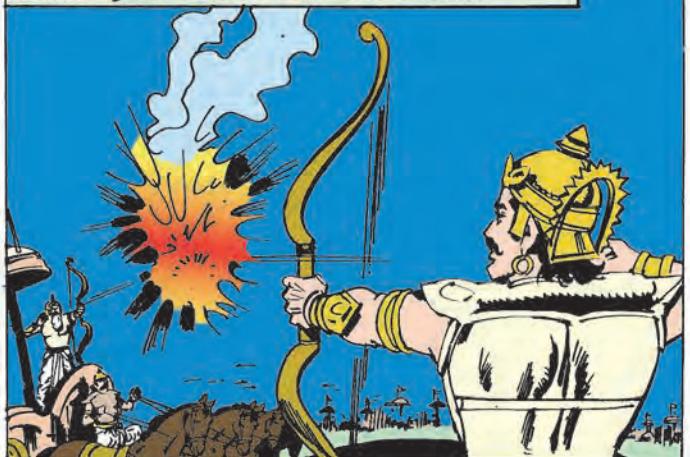
TEN OF YOUR BRAVE SONS ATTACKED BHEEMA BUT HE KILLED ALL OF THEM.



"MEANWHILE DRONA RAINED VARIOUS CELESTIAL WEAPONS ON YUDHISHTHIRA, INCLUDING THE BRAHMASTRA*."



"BUT HIS EFFORTS WERE FUTILE SINCE YUDHISHTHIRA MATCHED HIM WEAPON FOR WEAPON, AND FENDED OFF HIS ATTACK."



"DRONA NOW TURNED AWAY AND ATTACKED DRUPADA'S ARMY ONLY TO FIND ARJUNA AND BHEEMA CONFRONTING HIM."



"KAURAVA SOLDIERS ENFEEBLED BY LACK OF SLEEP AND TERRIFIED BY THE DARK NIGHT, RAN AMOK UNDER ARJUNA'S ONSLAUGHT."



* A WEAPON INVOKING THE POWER OF BRAHMA.

"ADDRESSING KARNA, DURYODHANA SAID—

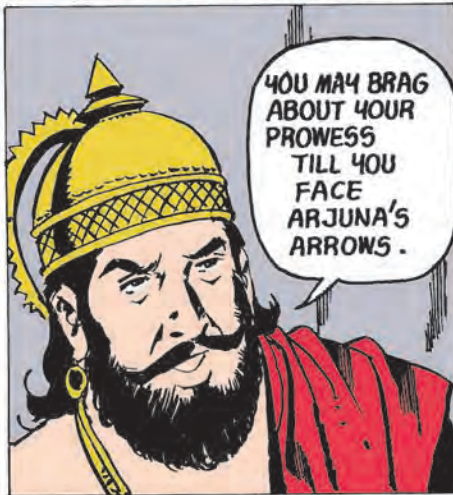
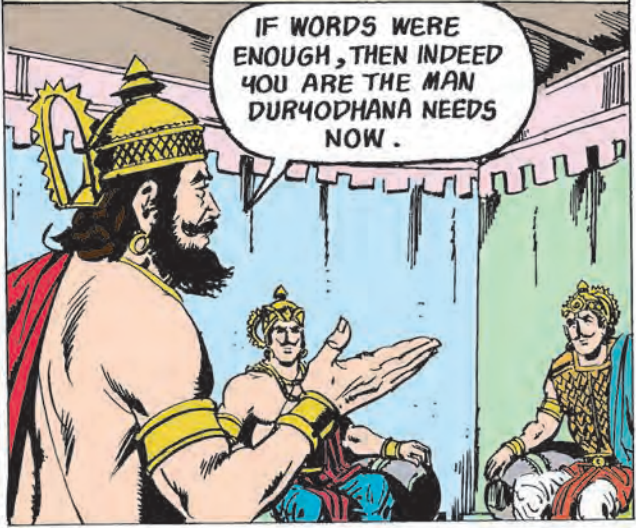
KARNA, MY FRIEND, THE TIME HAS COME FOR YOU TO PROVE YOUR FRIENDSHIP. COME TO THE RESCUE OF MY MEN.

REST ASSURED, I SWEAR I WILL KILL THE PANDAVAS AND PANCHALAS AND LAY THE EARTH AT YOUR FEET TO RULE OVER.



"KRIPACHARYA INTERVENED WITH A MOCKING SMILE—

IF WORDS WERE ENOUGH, THEN INDEED YOU ARE THE MAN DURYODHANA NEEDS NOW.



YOU MAY BRAG ABOUT YOUR PROWESS TILL YOU FACE ARJUNA'S ARROWS.

JUST AS BRAHMANAS ARE RENOWNED FOR THEIR SERMONS, KSHATRIYAS FOR THEIR VALOUR, YOUR PROWESS IS IN BUILDING CASTLES IN THE AIR.

YOU WILL SEE ME KILL ARJUNA WITH THE HELP OF THE SHAKTI GIVEN BY INDRA.



"WHEN KRIPACHARYA CONTINUED HIS TAUNTS, KARNA FLARED UP.



ONE MORE WORD FROM YOU AND I WILL CUT OFF YOUR TONGUE.

ENRAGED BY KARNA'S VERBAL DUEL WITH HIS UNCLE KRIPA, ASHWATTHAMA RUSHED TOWARDS KARNA WITH HIS DRAWN SWORD RAISED UP. BUT DURYODHANA SAID—

SHED THIS ANGER. WE HAVE A GREAT TASK BEFORE US.

WE WILL FORGIVE KARNA NOW. BUT SOON ARJUNA WILL SHATTER HIS EGO.



"AS SOON AS KARNA TOOK UP ARMS, THE PANDAVA ARMY ATTACKED HIM WITH FURY.

KILL KARNA.

DESTROY THIS FOOLISH MAN!



"BUT KARNA AT HIS BEST WAS TERROR INCARNATE.

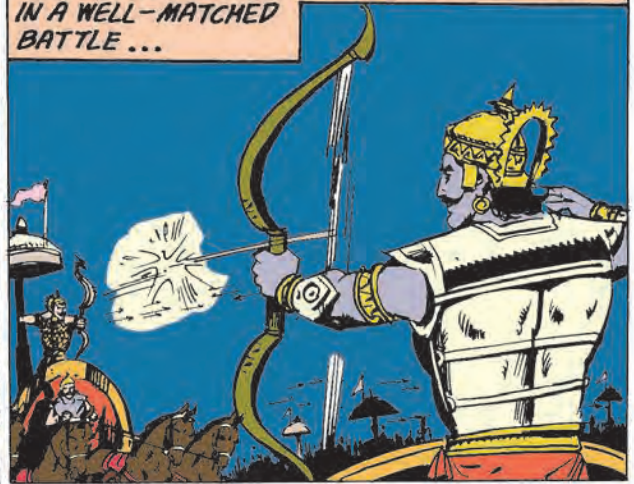


"SEEING KARNA'S PROWESS, DURYODHANA TOLD ASHWATTHAMA —

GREAT IS KARNA'S VALOUR. LOOK! ARJUNA IS MOVING TOWARDS HIM NOW. SEE THAT KARNA IS PROTECTED FROM HIM.



"KARNA AND ARJUNA WERE SOON ENGAGED IN A WELL-MATCHED BATTLE ...



"...TILL ARJUNA CUT OFF KARNA'S BOW STRING, KILLED HIS CHARIOTEER AND ALL THE FOUR HORSES. KARNA THEN RAN TOWARDS THE CHARIOT OF KRIPACHARYA.



"THE KAURAVA ARMY RAN HELTER-SKELTER IN FEAR OF ARJUNA. DURYODHANA SAID —

DO NOT RUN AWAY, MY BRAVE MEN! I WILL KILL ARJUNA.



"KRIPA CONFIDED IN ASHWATTHAMA.

IN HIS RAGE, DURYODHANA
WANTS TO CONFRONT
ARJUNA. STOP HIM
BEFORE HE GETS KILLED.



"ASHWATTHAMA AT ONCE WENT TO DURYODHANA.

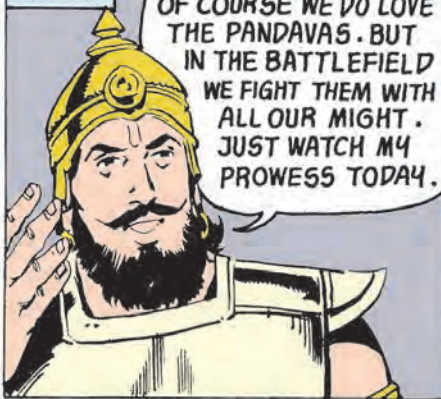
DO NOT INSULT ME
BY RUSHING TO
FIGHT ARJUNA
WHEN I AM ALIVE.
LEAVE THAT TO
ME.

AH ! BUT BOTH YOU AND YOUR
FATHER ARE BESOTTED WITH
YOUR LOVE FOR THE PANDAVAS.
ELSE YOU WOULD HAVE
ROUTED THEIR ARMY
WITH EASE.



"ASHWATTHAMA REALISED THAT
DURYODHANA WAS SPEAKING IN
ANGER.

OF COURSE WE DO LOVE
THE PANDAVAS. BUT
IN THE BATTLEFIELD
WE FIGHT THEM WITH
ALL OUR MIGHT.
JUST WATCH MY
PROWESS TODAY.



"TRUE TO HIS WORD, ASHWATTHAMA CHALLENGED THE
ENEMY FORCES.

COME, RAIN
YOUR
ARROWS
ON ME !



"SEEING THE PANDAVA SOLDIERS
FLEEING UNDER ASHWATTHAMA'S
ATTACK, DHRISTADYUMNA CHALLENGED
HIM —

COME FIGHT
WITH ME IF
YOU ARE
A TRUE
WARRIOR.

STAND STILL FOR
JUST TWO MINUTES
AND I WILL SEND
YOU TO THE ABODE
OF YAMA*



"THE DUEL OF WORDS BETWEEN ASHWATTHAMA
AND DHRISTADYUMNA WAS AS FIERCE AS THE
ONE WITH ARROWS.

WAIT ! WAIT !
I WILL
PIERCE
YOUR BODY
WITH
ARROWS!



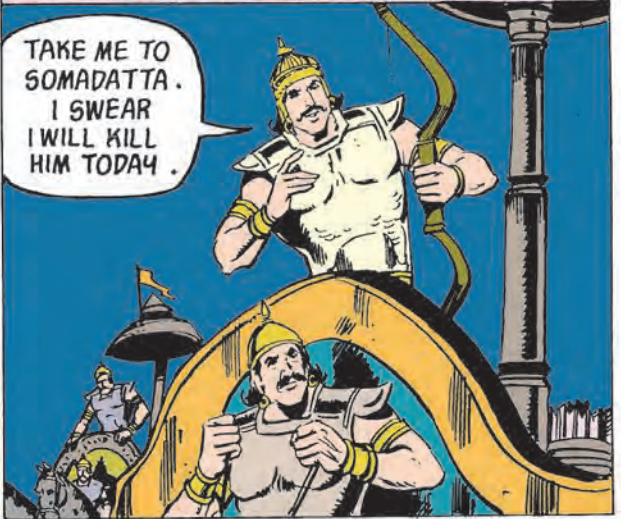
"ASHWATTHAMA MANAGED TO DESTROY DHRISHTADYUMNA'S UMBRELLA, REAR ATTENDANTS, CHARIOTEER AND ALL THE FOUR HORSES.

ASHWATTHAMA HAS DEFEATED DHRISHTADYUMNA.



MEANWHILE SATYAKI SAID TO HIS CHARIOTEER—

TAKE ME TO SOMADATTA.
I SWEAR
I WILL KILL
HIM TODAY.



"TRUE TO HIS WORD, SATYAKI DID SLAY SOMADATTA AFTER A LONG FIGHT.



WHEN THE KAURAVA WARRIORS CONVERGED ON SATYAKI, YUDHISHTHIRA RUSHED TO HIS HELP AND LAUNCHED A FURIOUS ATTACK ON DRONA. DEEPLY WOUNDED, DRONA SAT DOWN IN THE CHARIOT.



"ON RECOVERING, DRONA SENT A VAYU ASTRA* WHICH YUDHISHTHIRA REPELLED BRAVELY. SEEING THIS, KRISHNA CAUTIONED.

DRONA IS BENT ON CAPTURING YOU. AVOID HIM. A KING SHOULD FIGHT ONLY WITH A KING.

KRISHNA IS RIGHT. LET ME GO AND HELP BHEEMA IN HIS ATTACK.



"ALL THIS WHILE, THE BATTLE WAS BEING WAGED IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT, AIDED BY GUESSWORK AND THE CALLING OUT OF NAMES.

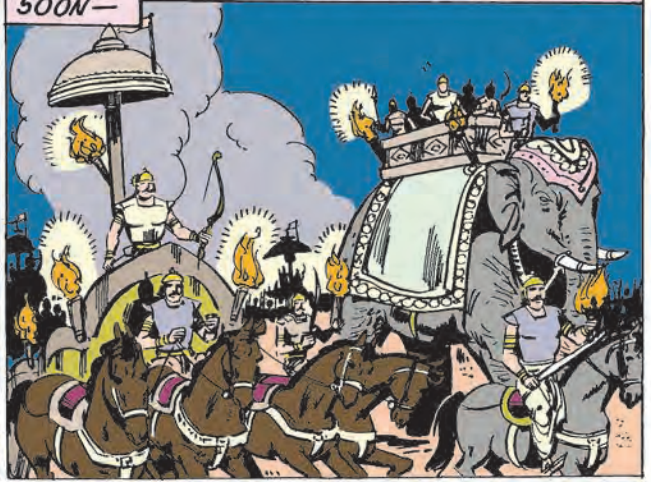


* ARROW INVOKING THE POWER OF THE WIND GOD.

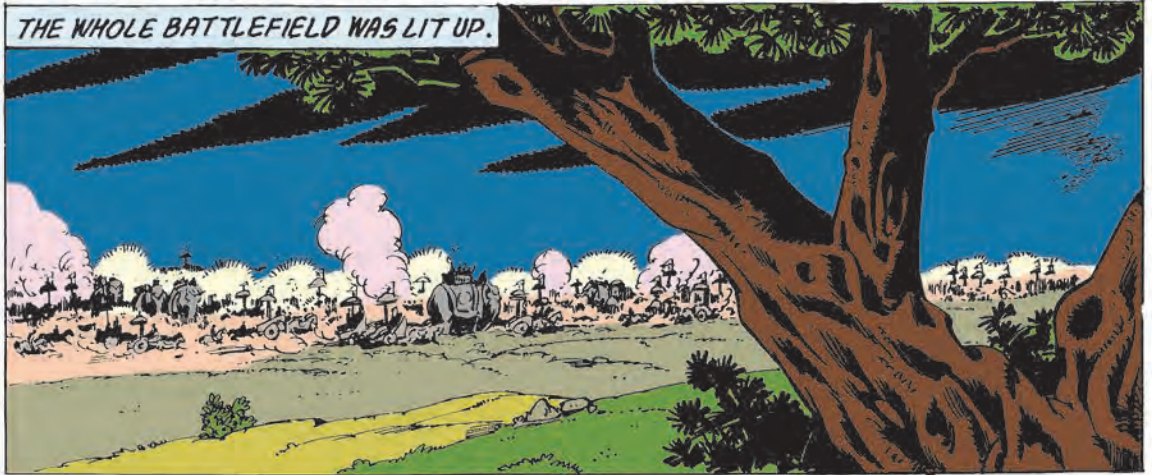
"DURYODHANA COMMANDED THE SOLDIERS ON FOOT."



"THE PANDAVA SOLDIERS DID LIKEWISE AND SOON—"



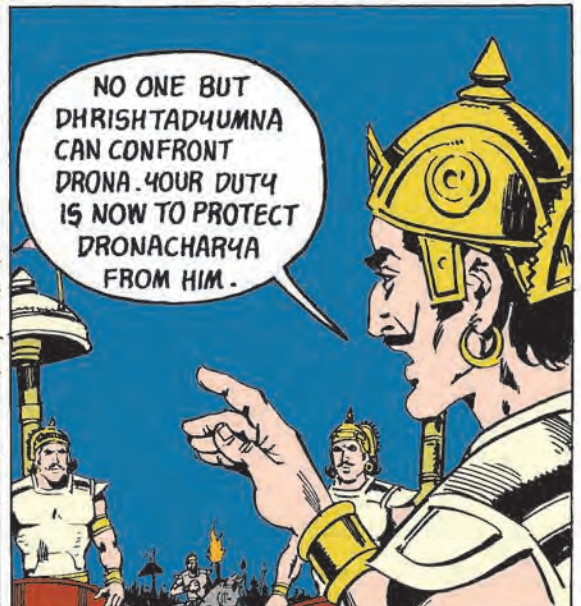
THE WHOLE BATTLEFIELD WAS LIT UP.



"MINDFUL OF DRONA'S INTENT TO FIGHT WITH ALL HIS MIGHT, DURYODHANA EXHORTED HIS KINSMEN —"

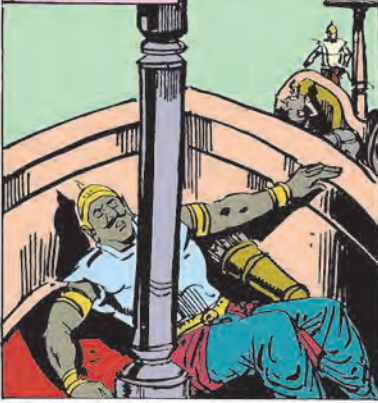


NO ONE BUT DHRISHTADYUMNA CAN CONFRONT DRONA. YOUR DUTY IS NOW TO PROTECT DRONACHARYA FROM HIM.



"IN THE BATTLE THAT ENSUED , SEVERAL DUELS WERE FOUGHT .

ASHWATTHAMA ABLY
AVERTED GHATOTKACHA'S
ADVANCES .



BHEEMA DEFEATED
DURYODHANA .



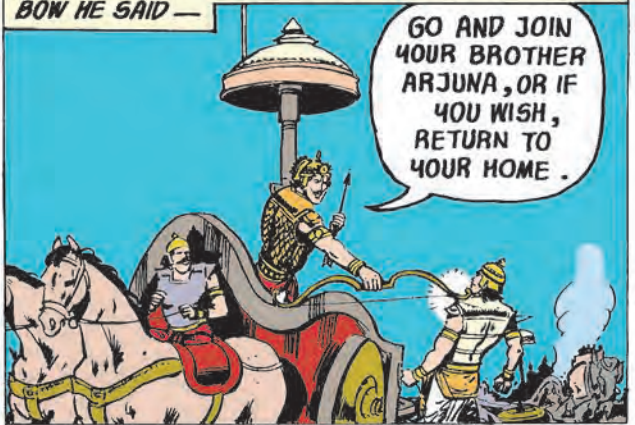
KARNA AND SAHADEVA
MET IN A DUEL .



"SAHADEVA JUMPED DOWN FROM HIS
CHARIOT AND PICKED UP THE WHEEL
OF THE CHARIOT TO FLING AT KARNA .



KARNA SHATTERED THE WHEEL WITH HIS
ARROWS BUT SPARED SAHADEVA'S LIFE .
LIGHTLY TOUCHING HIM WITH THE TIP OF HIS
BOW HE SAID —



"MEANWHILE , VIRATA WAS DEFEATED
BY SHALYA AND SHIKHANDI WAS
VANQUISHED BY KRIPA . HOWEVER ,
NAKULA SCORED A VICTORY OVER SHAKUNI .



"THE BATTLE THAT RAGED BETWEEN KARNA AND
SATYAKI WAS A TERRIBLE ONE .



"KARNA'S FURY WAS CREATING HAVOC AMONG THE PANDAVA FORCES. ARJUNA SAID —



O KRISHNA !
TAKE ME TOWARDS
KARNA . I MUST
KILL HIM OR BE
KILLED TODAY .

"AWARE OF THE MIGHTY SHAKTI IN KARNA'S POSSESSION , KRISHNA DEMURRED —



BESIDES YOU , GHATOTKACHA
ALONE IS CAPABLE OF FACING
KARNA . LET HIM DO SO , WHILE
YOU PROTECT YUDHISHTHIRA .

" THEY SUMMONED GHATOTKACHA .



FIGHT KARNA
WITH ALL YOUR
ASTRAS AND
KILL HIM . WE ARE
DEPENDING ON
YOU .



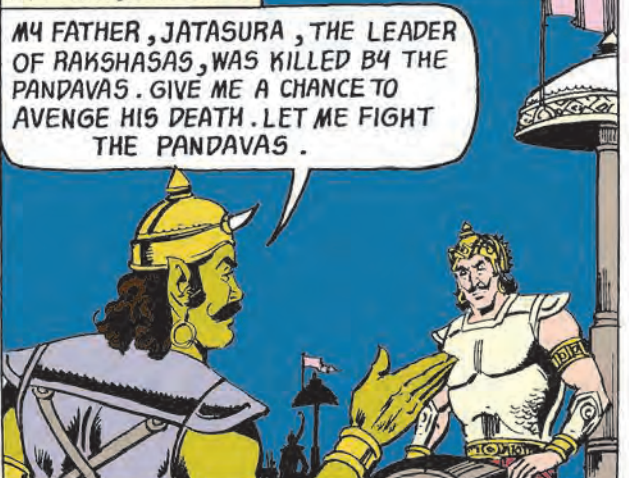
SATYAKI WILL
BE WITH YOU .
TOGETHER
YOU CAN WORK
WONDERS .

I WILL GO AT ONCE .
SUCH A BATTLE
WILL I WAGE TODAY
THAT IT WILL BE
REMEMBERED
FOR EVER .

" IN THE MIDST OF THAT DREADFUL NIGHT , KARNA AND GHATOTKACHA FACED EACH OTHER .



" JUST AS DURYODHANA WAS ABOUT TO SEND DUHSHASANA TO KARNA'S AID , ALAMBUSHA APPROACHED HIM .



MY FATHER , JATASURA , THE LEADER
OF RAKSHASAS , WAS KILLED BY THE
PANDAVAS . GIVE ME A CHANCE TO
AVENGE HIS DEATH . LET ME FIGHT
THE PANDAVAS .

"DURYODHANA WAS GLAD TO OBLIGE .

YOU ARE
WELCOME. GO AND
FIGHT
GHATOTKACHA.



"THE TWO RAKSHASAS FOUGHT WITH VARIOUS
WEAPONS AND FINALLY WITH BARE HANDS .



SUDDENLY , GHATOTKACHA JUMPED UP
AND SWOOPED DOWN WITH A SWORD .

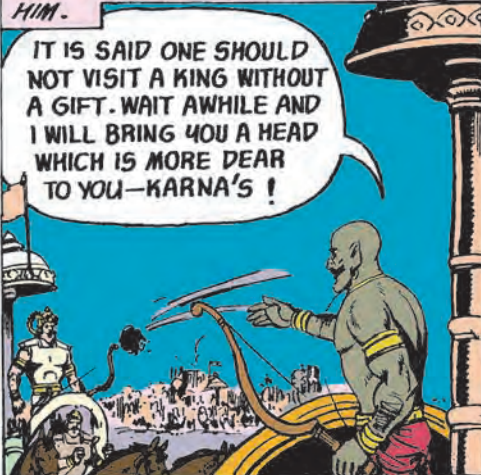


" WITH A DREADFUL CRY , GHATOTKACHA CUT
OFF HIS OPPONENT'S HEAD .

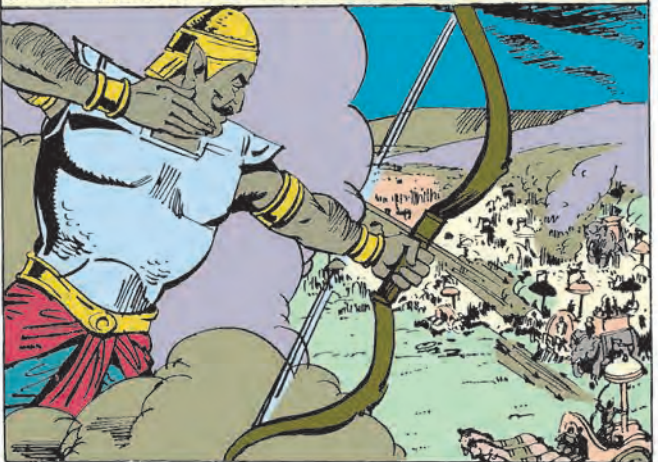


" APPROACHING DURYODHANA , HE
THREW ALAMBUSHA 'S HEAD TOWARDS
HIM .

IT IS SAID ONE SHOULD
NOT VISIT A KING WITHOUT
A GIFT . WAIT AWHILE AND
I WILL BRING YOU A HEAD
WHICH IS MORE DEAR
TO YOU—KARNA'S !



SO FIERCE WAS THE BATTLE BETWEEN KARNA AND
GHATOTKACHA THAT IT MADE MIGHTY WARRIORS TREMBLE .
GHATOTKACHA WAS IN THE SKY IN A MINUTE ...



"... AND ON THE GROUND THE NEXT . HE APPEARED TO BE EVERYWHERE AT ONCE . ONLY THE MIGHTY KARNA COULD CONFRONT HIM .



"ALTHOUGH KARNA ABLY CONFRONTED HIM , GHATOTKACHA'S ONSLAUGHT TERRIFIED THE MAURAVAS .

PROTECT US , O KARNA !

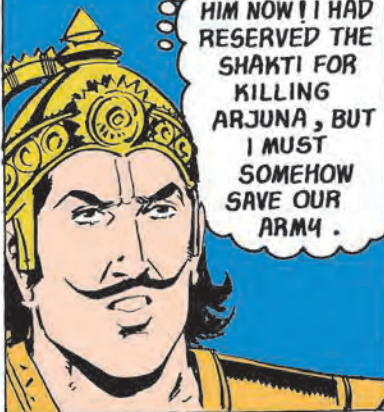
USE YOUR SHAKTI !

KILL GHATOTKACHA .

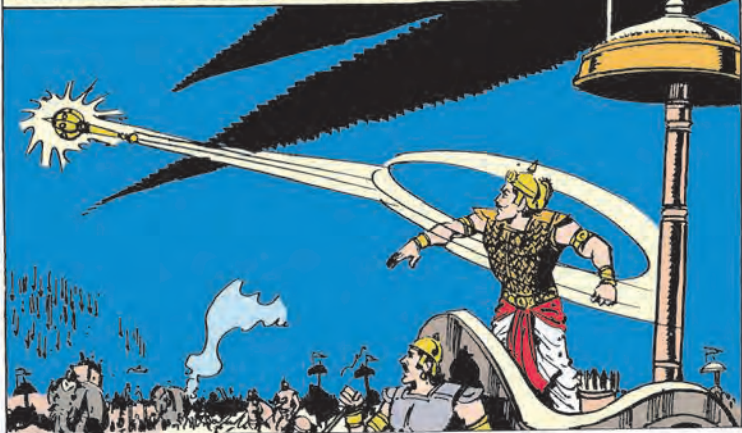


" KARNA WAS NOW IN A DILEMMA .

I MUST KILL HIM NOW ! I HAD RESERVED THE SHAKTI FOR KILLING ARJUNA , BUT I MUST SOMEHOW SAVE OUR ARMY .



"RELUCTANTLY KARNA TOOK UP THE SHAKTI IN HIS RIGHT HAND AND HURLED IT AT GHATOTKACHA .



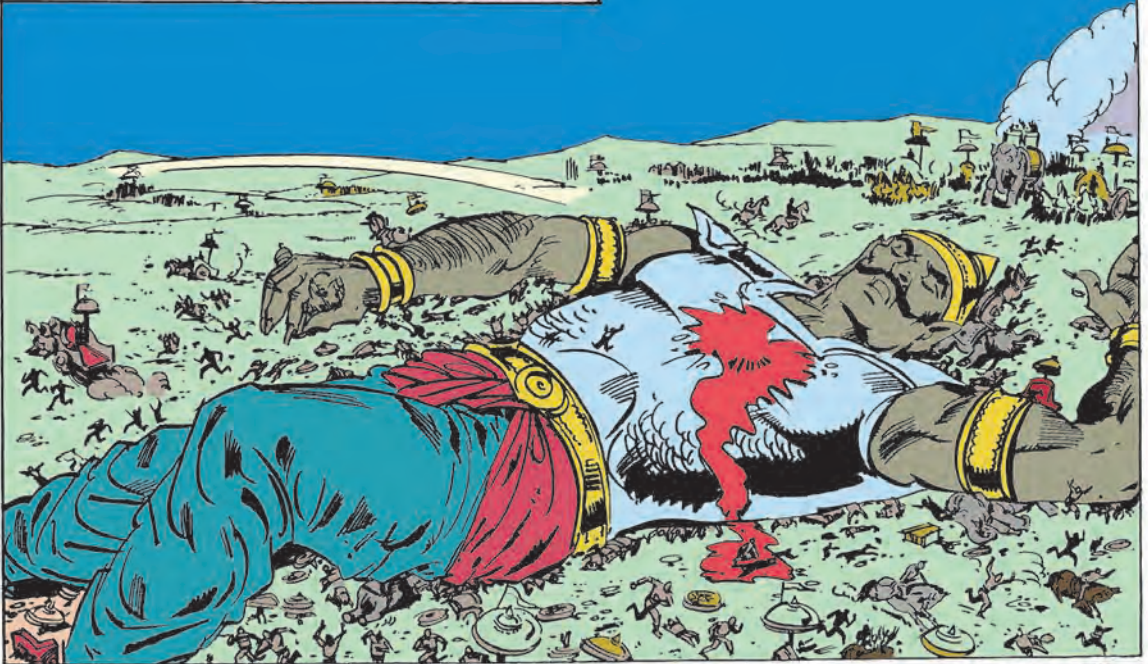
LIKE A SHAFT OF LIGHTNING , IT SPED TOWARDS GHATOTKACHA .



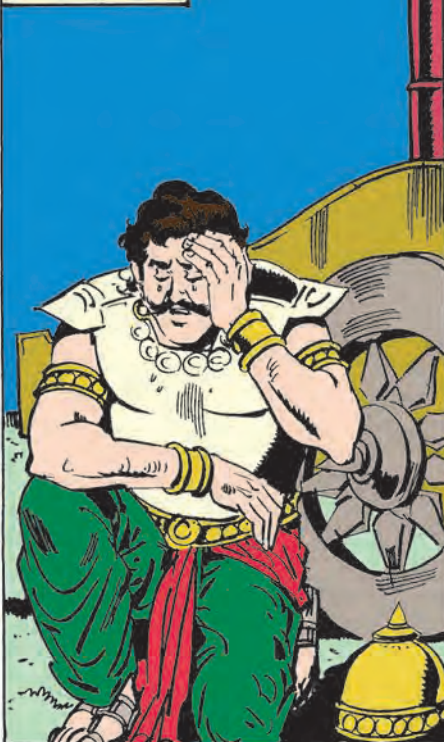
" GHATOTKACHA KNEW HIS END WAS NEAR . AS A LAST DEVICE , HE EXPANDED HIS BODY WITH MAGICAL POWERS ...



... SO THAT WHEN THE SHAKTI PIERCED AND FELLED HIM, A VAST NUMBER OF KAURAVA SOLDIERS WERE CRUSHED UNDER HIS WEIGHT.



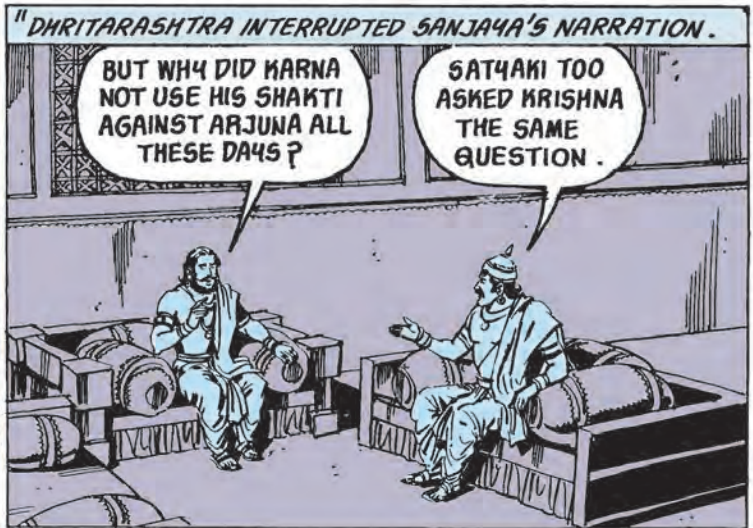
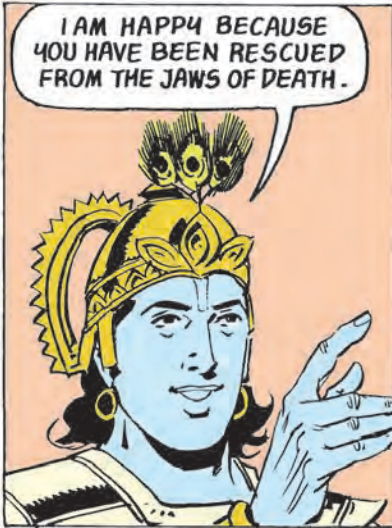
"BHEEMA AND OTHER PANDAVAS WERE SHOCKED AT HIS DEATH."



KRISHNA CONSOLED THEM AND SAID TO ARJUNA.

KARNA HAS USED HIS SHAKTI ONCE AND IT HAS RETURNED TO INDRA. OH! HOW I HAD WORRIED ABOUT HIS USING IT AGAINST YOU. NOW BEREFT OF THE SHAKTI, KARNA IS LIKE A FANGLESS SERPENT.





"KRISHNA REPLIED—

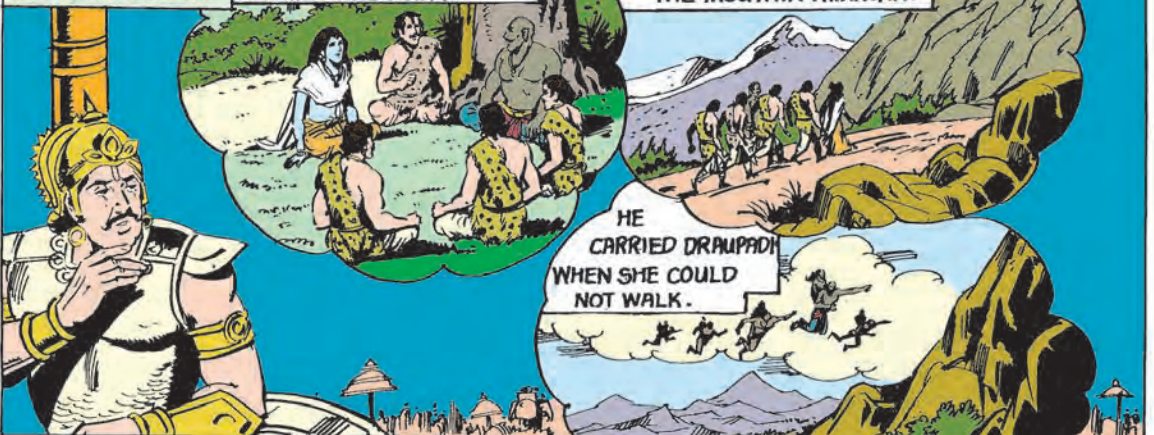
EVERYDAY KARNA WOULD PLAN TO ISOLATE ARJUNA IN A DUEL AND KILL HIM WITH THE SHAKTI BUT I SO MANOEUVRED ARJUNA'S CHARIOT THAT THEY DID NOT CONFRONT EACH OTHER. I ALSO CLOUDED KARNA'S MIND A LITTLE TO MAKE HIM FORGET ABOUT HIS MOST POWERFUL WEAPON.

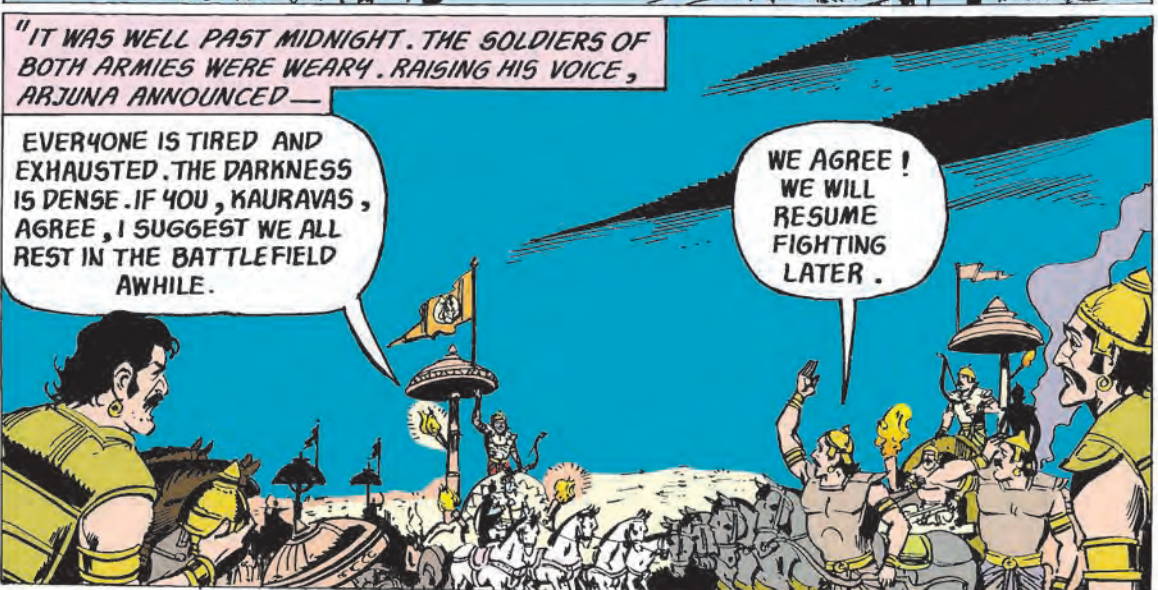
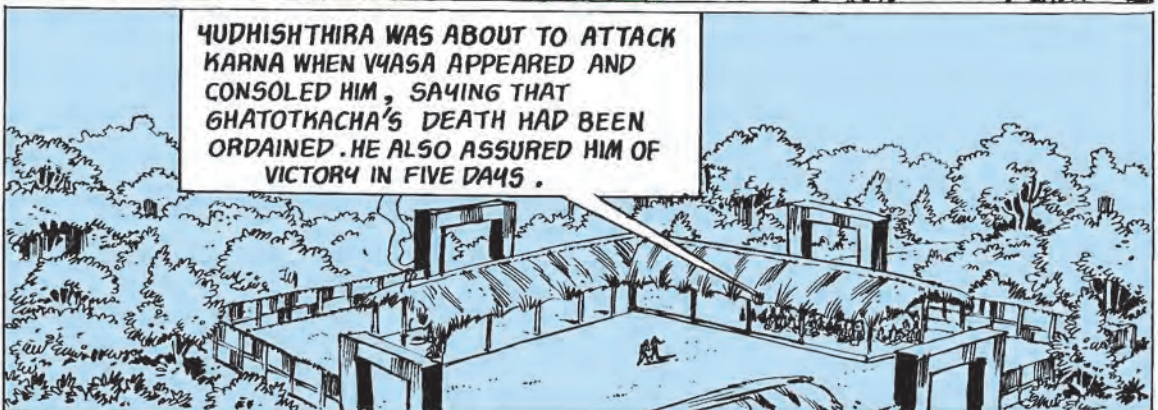
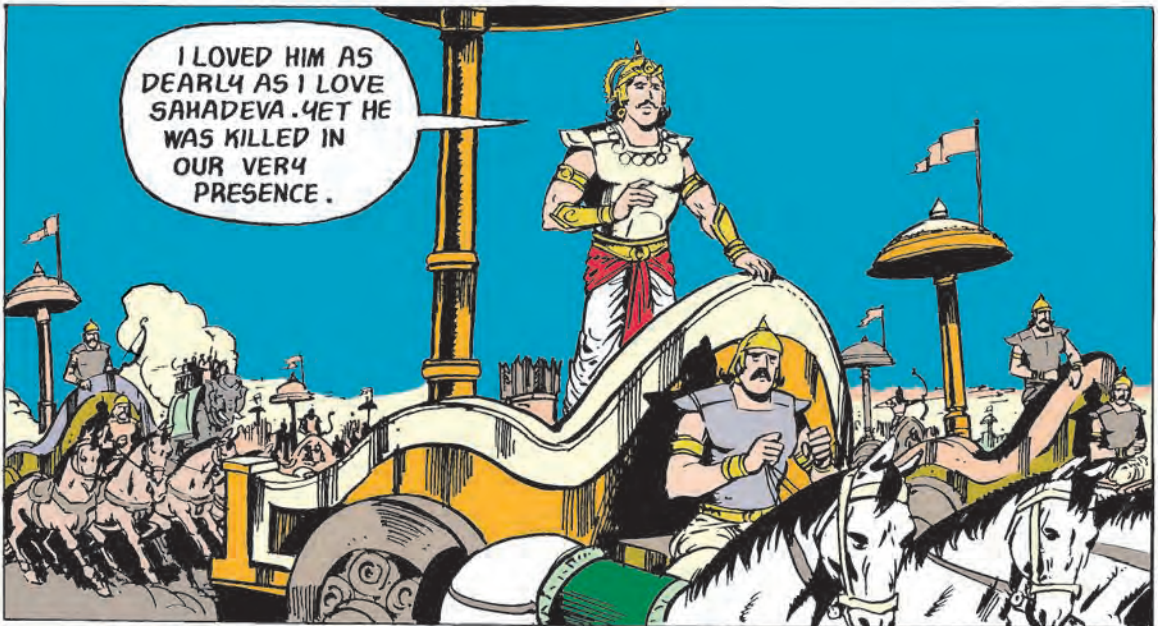


"YUDHISHTHIRA LAMENTED OVER GHATOTKACHA'S DEATH AND RECALLED HOW HE HAD HELPED THEM IN VARIOUS WAYS.

HE KEPT US COMPANY WHILE ARJUNA WAS AWAY.

HE WAS WITH US IN THE MOUNTAIN HIMAVAN.





"AS ARJUNA'S SUGGESTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY ACCEPTED, THE SOLDIERS GRATEFULLY LAY DOWN TO SLEEP."



"THE BATTLEFIELD WHICH HAD RESOUNDED WITH WAR CRIES WAS NOW ENVELOPED IN SILENCE. THE HUGE ARMIES LAY STILL LIKE A PAINTING DRAWN BY A GIFTED ARTIST..."



"...TILL THE MOON CAME UP. ONE BY ONE THE MEN BEGAN TO STIR. THE BATTLE WAS RESUMED IN THE BRIGHT LIGHT OF THE MOON."



DURYODHANA SAID TO DRONA -

WITH YOUR RENOWNED PROWESS AND CELESTIAL WEAPONS, YOU COULD EASILY DEFEAT THE PANDAVAS. BUT ALAS! YOU CONTINUE TO FAVOUR THEM.

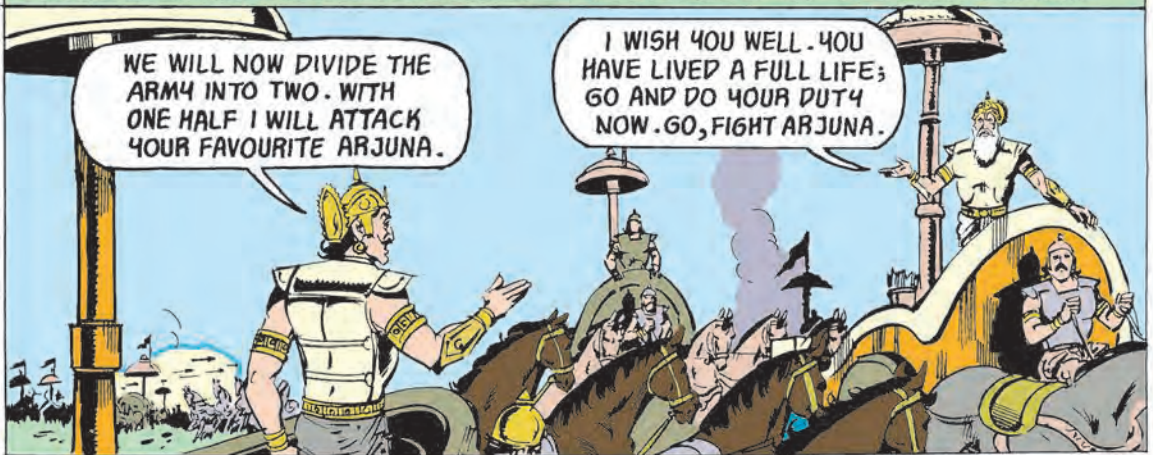


"THE OFT-REPEATED SARCASM AND ACCUSATION WERE BEGINNING TO IRRITATE DRONA."

SO FAR I HAVE FOUGHT WITH FAIR AND JUST MEANS AND REFRAINED FROM USING DIVINE WEAPONS ON ORDINARY SOLDIERS. NOW IF YOU SO WISH, I WILL USE UNFAIR MEANS AS WELL, TO FIGHT. BUT BELIEVE ME, WHEN I SAY, ARJUNA IS INVINCIBLE.



"DURYODHANA WAS TOUCHED TO THE QUICK BY THIS PRAISE OF HIS ARCH ENEMY. HE SAID -



"ONE HALF OF THE ARMY WITH DURYODHANA, DUHSHASANA, SHAKUNI AND KARNA, SET OUT TO CONFRONT ARJUNA. BUT THEY WERE ROUTED IN NO TIME.



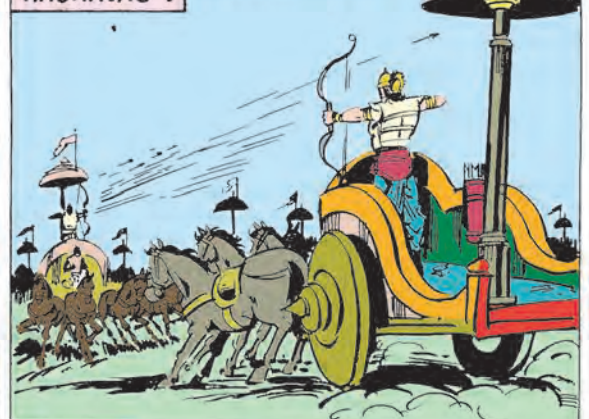
"DRONA LED THE REST OF THE ARMY AND KILLED THREE GRANDSONS OF DRUPADA.



"WITH TWO SHARP JAVELINS, HE KILLED VIRATA AND DRUPADA. DHRISTADYUMNA WAS STUNNED WITH GRIEF.



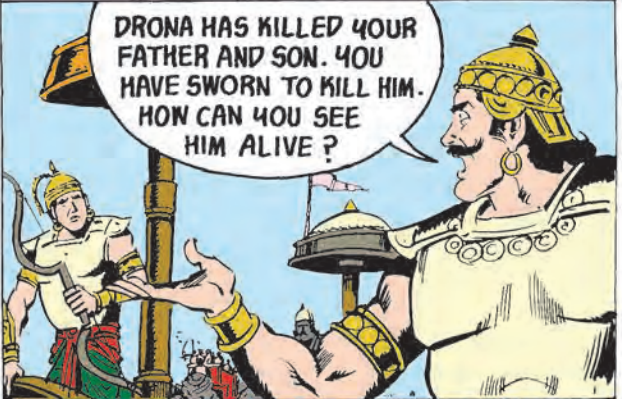
"SWEARING REVENGE, DHRISTADYUMNA ATTACKED DRONA AND THE KAURAVAS.



"DURYODHANA CAME TO HELP DRONA WITH THE REST OF THE ARMY .



"TRY AS HE MIGHT, DHARISHTADYUMNA COULD NOT REACH DRONA . BHEEMA TAUNTED HIM ...



... AND PENETRATING THE KAURAVA ARMY , ENGAGED IN A FIERCE BATTLE WITH KARNA .

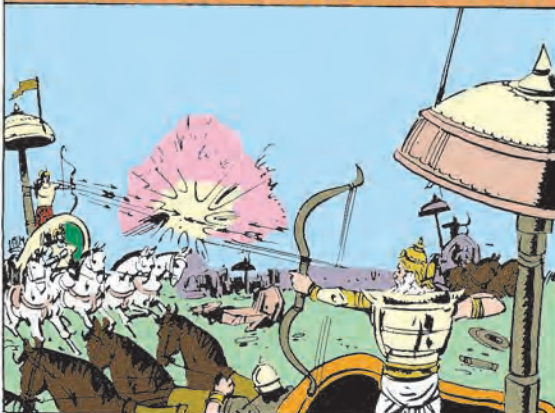
"MEANWHILE THE SUN ROSE IN THE EAST* THE WARRIORS NOW FOUGHT WITH RENEWED VIGOUR . KARNA WAS ENGAGED IN A COMBAT BY BHEEMA .



"BUT THE SPECTACULAR SIGHT WAS THE CONFRONTATION . BETWEEN DRONA AND ARJUNA .



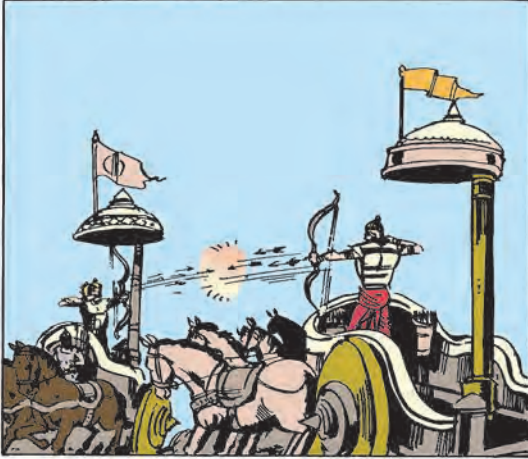
" AFTER A PROLONGED FIGHT WITH EARTHLY AND CELESTIAL WEAPONS , DRONA SENT THE BRAHMASTRA TOWARDS ARJUNA WHO COUNTERED IT WITH THE SAME ASTRA .



NOW DRONA TURNED AWAY FROM ARJUNA AND FOUGHT THE PANCHALA ARMY .



"DURYODHANA AND SATYAKI WERE ENGAGED IN A STRANGE ENCOUNTER."



"WHILE THEY RAINED ARROWS AT EACH OTHER, THEY RECALLED WITH NOSTALGIA THEIR EARLIER DAYS. WHAT HAPPY TIMES WE HAD TOGETHER, DEAR SATYAKI. NOW BECAUSE OF MY GREED, WE MEET AS ENEMIES."

MY DEAR DURYODHANA, THIS IS NEITHER OUR GURU'S HOUSE NOR AN ASSEMBLY. LET US FIGHT LIKE TRUE KSHATRIYAS.



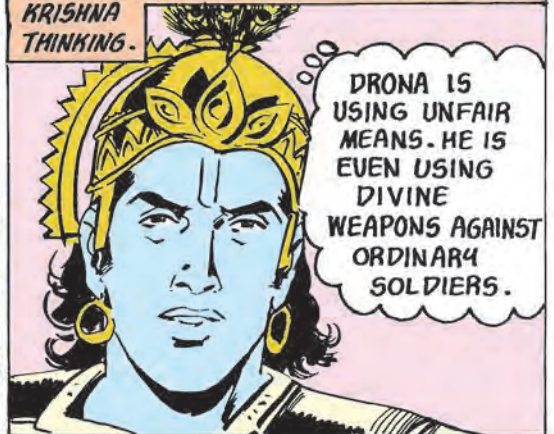
"MEANWHILE DRONA WAS FIGHTING AS IF POSSESSED BY A DEMON. THE PANDAVAS WATCHED AGHAST."

THIS IS NOT LIKE THE ACHARYA AT ALL.

HE DOES NOT LOOK HUMAN.



"THE PANIC AMONG THE SOLDIERS SET KRISHNA THINKING."



DRONA IS USING UNFAIR MEANS. HE IS EVEN USING DIVINE WEAPONS AGAINST ORDINARY SOLDIERS.

"HE SAID TO YODHISHTHIRA -

IF DRONA KEEPS FIGHTING THUS, YOU WILL HAVE NO ARMY LEFT. WE WILL HAVE TO MAKE HIM LAY DOWN HIS WEAPONS.

YES, BUT HOW?



KRISHNA THOUGHTFULLY SAID -

I AM SURE IF HE HEARS THAT HIS SON ASHWATTHAMA IS NO MORE, HE WILL STOP FIGHTING.



"ARJUNA DID NOT APPROVE OF THIS SUGGESTION. YUDHISHTHIRA AGREED AFTER MUCH PERSUASION. MEANWHILE, BHEEMA KILLED AN ELEPHANT CALLED ASHWATTHAMA. GOING NEAR DRONA HE ANNOUNCED—



DRONA ALMOST FAINTED WITH SHOCK.



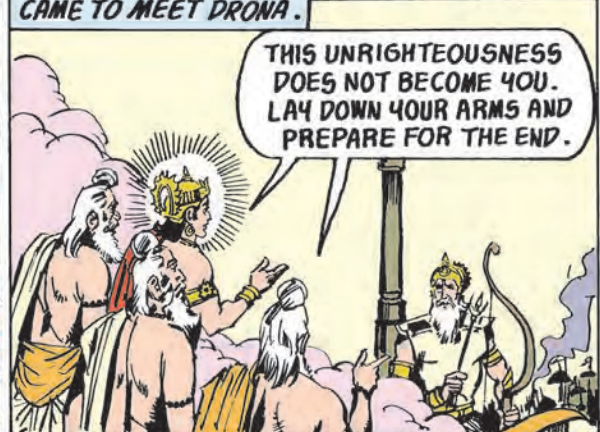
BUT SOON RECOVERED.



"DRONA RESUMED FIGHTING WITH ALL WEAPONS AT HIS DISPOSAL, SLAUGHTERING THE PANDAVA FORCES.



"SEEING HIS UNFAIR AND INHUMAN APPROACH, THE RISHIS FROM HEAVEN, LED BY AGNI, CAME TO MEET DRONA.



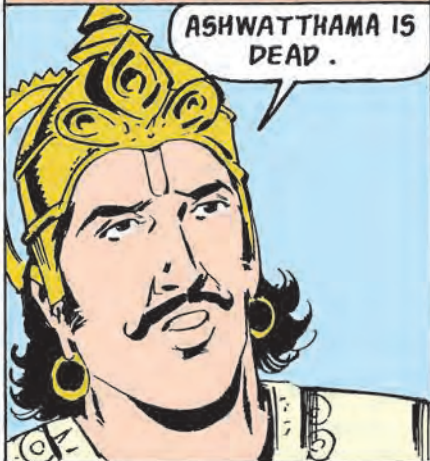
"DEEPLY MOVED BY THEIR COUNSEL AND BHEEMA'S EARLIER ANNOUNCEMENT, DRONA LOOKED AT YUDHISHTHIRA AND SAID —



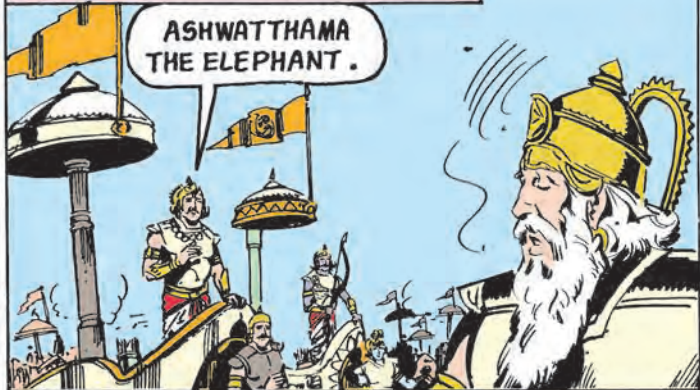
YUDHISHTHIRA HAD NEVER SPOKEN AN UNTRUTH IN HIS LIFE. BUT KRISHNA HAD ANTICIPATED THIS SITUATION AND TOLD HIM.



"SO NOW, HE REPLIED —



ADDING IN AN INAUDIBLE ASIDE —



AS SOON AS THE LIE WAS UTTERED YUDHISHTHIRA'S CHARIOT TOUCHED THE GROUND.*

"HEARING THE NEWS FROM YUDHISHTHIRA, DRONA FAINTED. DHRISTADYUMNA RUSHED TOWARDS HIM.

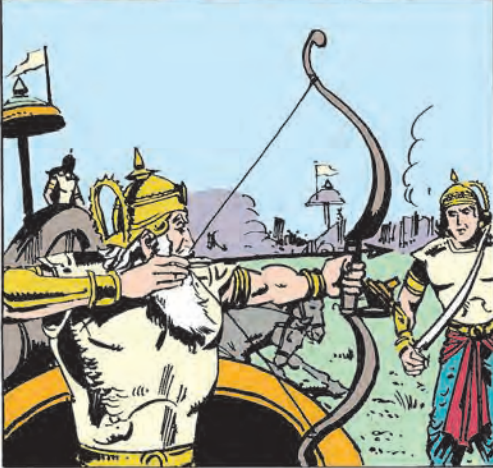


"WHEN DRONA GAINED CONSCIOUSNESS, HE COULD NOT GAIN HIS EARLIER STRENGTH. YET HE KILLED DHRISTADYUMNA'S HORSES.

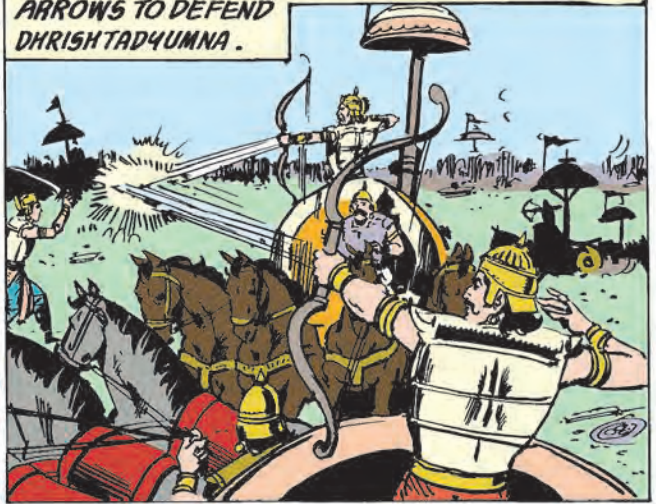


* BECAUSE OF HIS RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT YUDHISHTHIRA'S CHARIOT WAS ALWAYS FOUR FINGER'S' BREADTH ABOVE THE GROUND.

"NOW DRONA SHOT SPECIAL SHORT-RANGE ARROWS, AT DHRISHTADYUMNA.



"SATYAKI INTERVENED IN TIME WITH A VOLLEY OF ARROWS TO DEFEND DHRISHTADYUMNA.



BHEEMA CONFRONTED DRONA AND SAID SARCASTICALLY -

YOU TEACH DHARMA TO OTHERS
YET YOU ABANDON YOUR OWN
DUTY AS A BRAHMANA, EVEN
WITH YOUR SON DEAD, YOU
CONTINUE TO FIGHT.

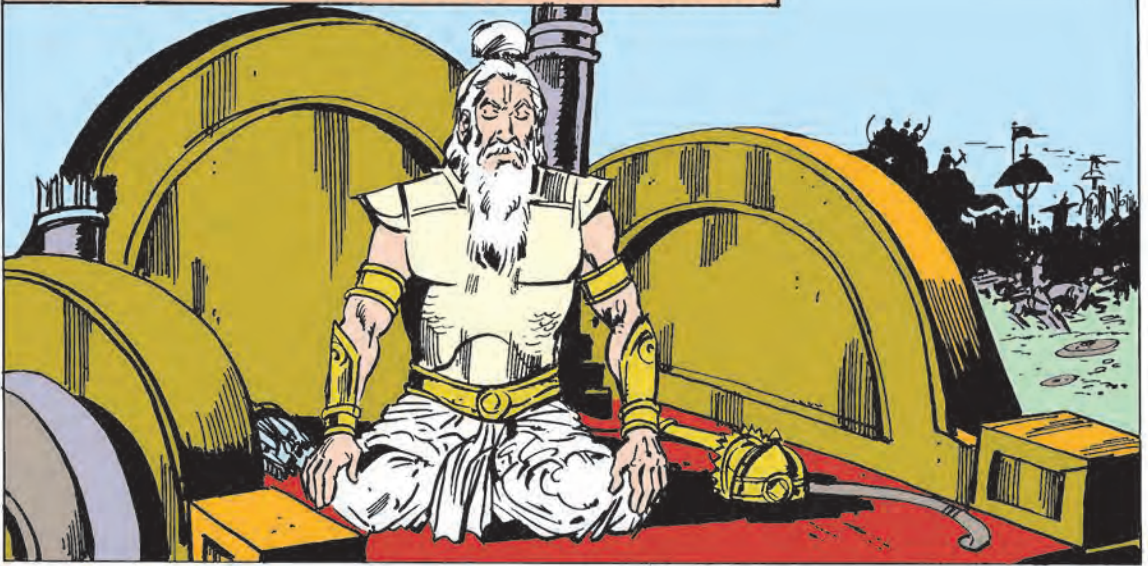


THROWING HIS WEAPONS AWAY, DRONA EXCLAIMED -

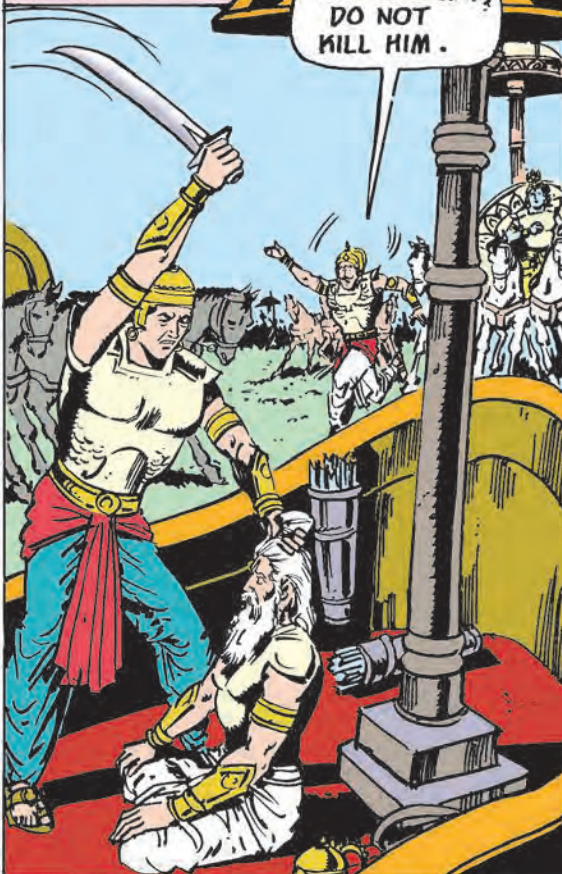
O KARNA, O KRIPA,
DURYODHANA! FIGHT
WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT.
I HEREBY LAY DOWN
MY ARMS.



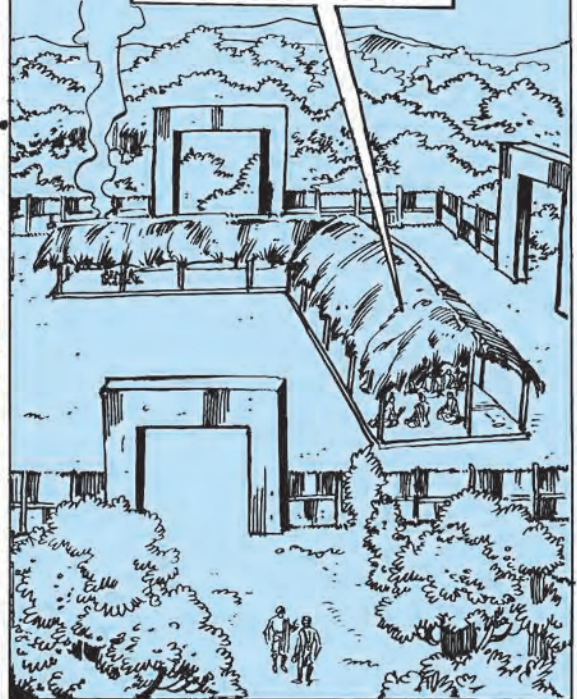
"HE SAT DOWN IN HIS CHARIOT IN A POSE OF MEDITATION."



"DHRISHTADYUMNA TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THIS AND POUNCED ON HIM, SWORD IN HAND."



THUS ON THAT FATEFUL DAY, EVEN AS ARJUNA PROTESTED DHRISHTADYUMNA KILLED DRONA, AS HE HAD VOWED TO DO.

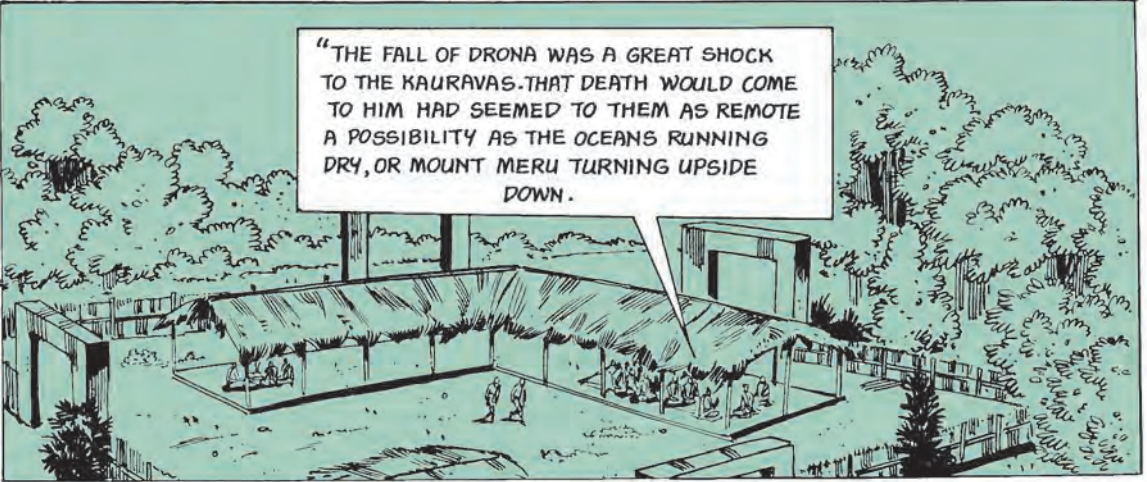


THUS ENDS THE THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VYASA'S IMMORTAL ITIHASA - THE MAHABHARATA.

Mahabharata - 37

KARNA IN COMMAND

"THE FALL OF DRONA WAS A GREAT SHOCK TO THE KAURAVAS. THAT DEATH WOULD COME TO HIM HAD SEEMED TO THEM AS REMOTE A POSSIBILITY AS THE OCEANS RUNNING DRY, OR MOUNT MERU TURNING UPSIDE DOWN."



"IN FEAR AND PANIC, THE KAURAVA SOLDIERS BEGAN TO RETREAT."



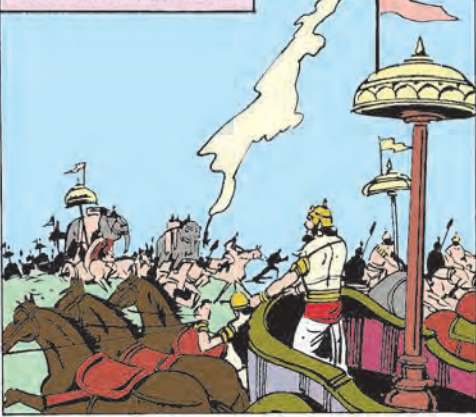
"EVEN WARRIORS LIKE KARNA, SHALYA AND KRIPACHARYA FLED FROM THE BATTLEFIELD."



"WHILE SOME SOLDIERS DISCARDED THEIR ARMOUR AS THEY RAN, OTHERS JUMPED ONTO THEIR HORSES TO GET AWAY FASTER."



"IN THE MIDST OF THE PANIC AND THE CONFUSION ASHWATTHAMA ADVANCED WITH HIS FORCES."



"SURPRISED TO SEE THE ARMY ON THE RUN, HE ASKED DURYODHANA —"



WHY ARE THEY FLEEING?
WHY DO NOT YOU STOP
THEM?



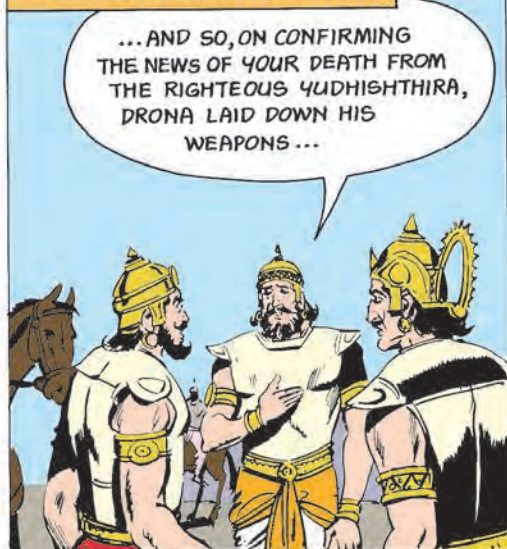
O KING! HAS
ANY LION-HEART-
ED WARRIOR
FALLEN? IS THAT
WHY THEY ARE
FILLED WITH
FEAR? TELL ME.

"DURYODHANA COULD NOT BEAR TO TELL HIM. WITH HESITATION, HE ASKED KRIPACHARYA TO SPEAK TO ASHWATTHAMA."



GURUDEVA, PLEASE TELL
HIM THE NEWS.

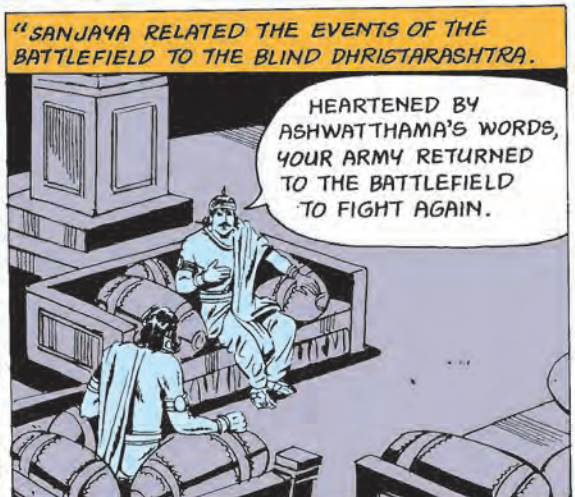
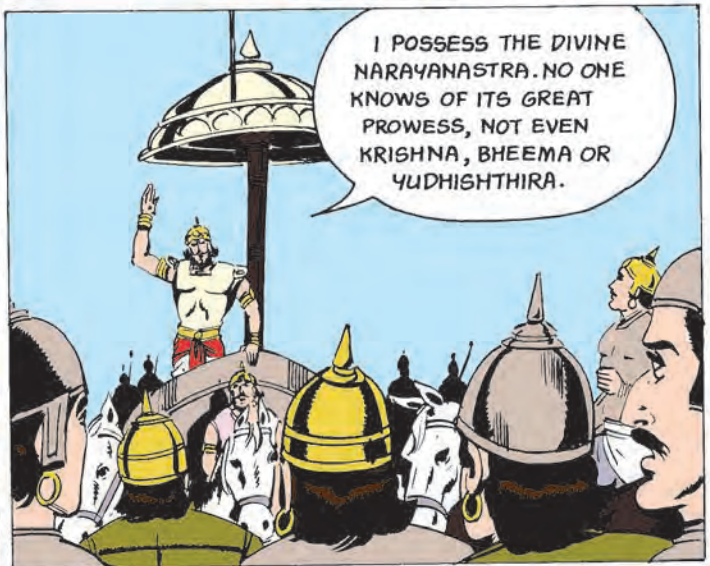
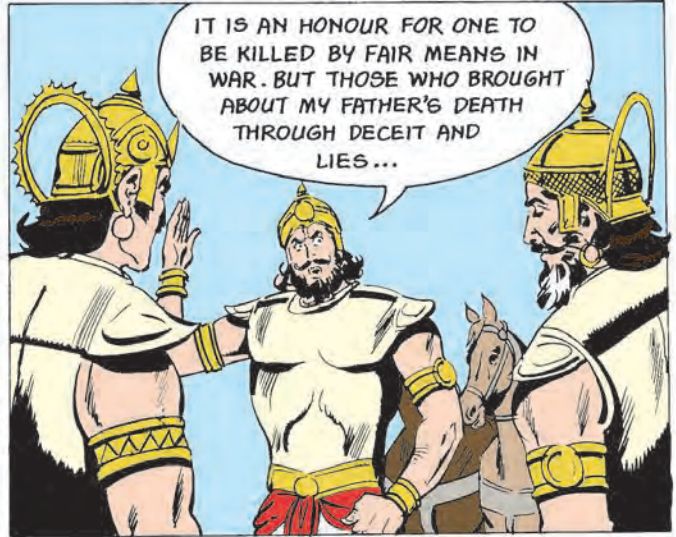
"IN A PAINED VOICE KRIPACHARYA RELATED THE EVENTS TO ASHWATTHAMA."



...AND SO, ON CONFIRMING
THE NEWS OF YOUR DEATH FROM
THE RIGHTEOUS YUDHISHTHIRA,
DRONA LAID DOWN HIS
WEAPONS ...



...AND DHRSHTADYUMNA
SEIZED THE CHANCE TO
KILL HIM.



"THE TUMULT OF CONCH SHELLS AND TRUMPETS HERALDING THE APPROACH OF THE KAURAVAS, INFUSED WITH ENTHUSIASM AGAIN, TOOK THE PANDAVAS BY SURPRISE.



"YUDHISHTHIRA ASKED ARJUNA —

DISHEARTENED BY DRONA'S DEATH, THE KAURAVAS HAD FLED. BUT NOW THEY APPEAR TO BE RETURNING TO FIGHT.

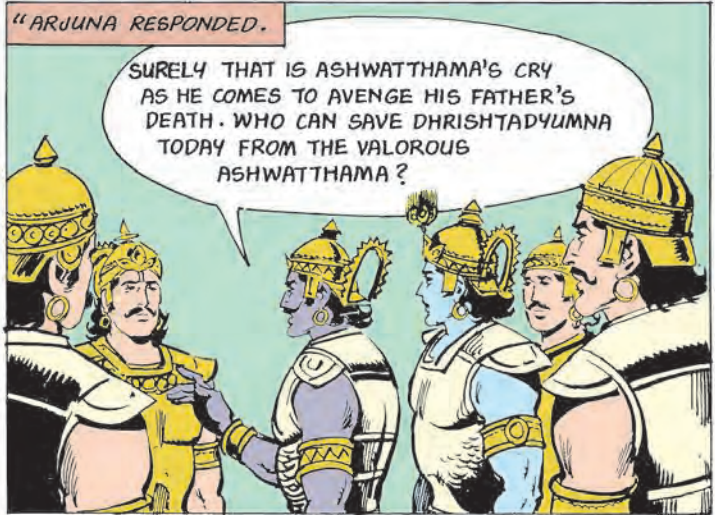


WHO COULD BE LEADING THEM BACK TO BATTLE? WHOSE LION ROAR DO WE HEAR?

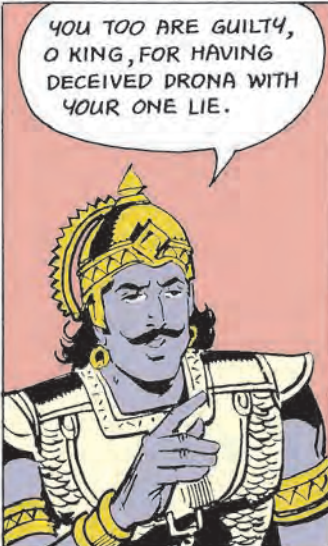


"ARJUNA RESPONDED.

SURELY THAT IS ASHWATTHAMA'S CRY AS HE COMES TO AVENGE HIS FATHER'S DEATH. WHO CAN SAVE DHRISTADYUMNA TODAY FROM THE VALOROUS ASHWATTHAMA?



YOU TOO ARE GUILTY, O KING, FOR HAVING DECEIVED DRONA WITH YOUR ONE LIE.



OH! WE MUST BE ALL GETTING OLD AND SENILE TO HAVE BEHAVED AS WE DID.



OUR GREED FOR A KINGDOM LED US TO THE THREEFOLD SIN OF KILLING DRONA WHO WAS A BRAHMANA, OUR ELDER AND OUR GURU. OH! I SHOULD DIE OF SHAME NOW.



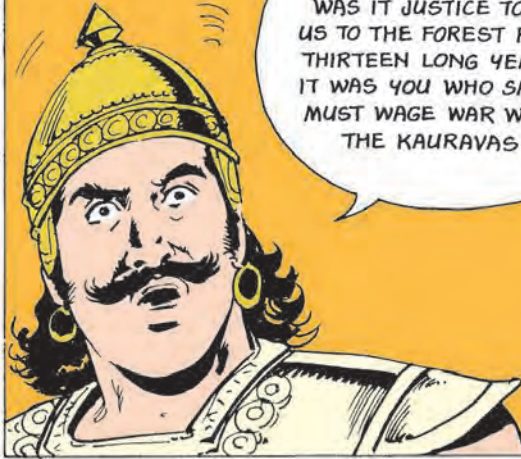
"ALL THE PANDAVAS WERE DUMBSTRUCK AT ARJUNA'S OUTBURST. THEN BHEEMA SPOKE UP.

AH! MY RIGHTEOUS BROTHER! YOU SOUND LIKE A BRAHMANA GIVING A DISCOURSE. BUT AS A TRUE-BLOODED KSHATRIYA, THESE WORDS ILL BECOME YOU.



"ANGER WAS EVIDENT IN WHAT BHEEMA SAID .

WAS NOT OUR KINGDOM SEIZED BY UNFAIR MEANS? WAS IT JUSTICE TO BANISH US TO THE FOREST FOR THIRTEEN LONG YEARS? IT WAS YOU WHO SAID WE MUST WAGE WAR WITH THE KAURAVAS.



ALL THESE YEARS, WE HELD OUR ANGER IN CHECK BECAUSE YUDHISHTHIRA INSISTED THAT WE WAIT TILL OUR EXILE WAS OVER. THE VERY SAME YUDHISHTHIRA, WHOM YOU NOW CHOOSE TO FIND FAULT WITH.



AND TO TOP IT ALL, A WARRIOR OF YOUR STATURE PRAISES ASHWATTHAMA THUS! WHY, ARMED WITH MY MACE, I CAN DEAL WITH HIM ALL BY MYSELF.



"DHRISTADYUMNA SAID —

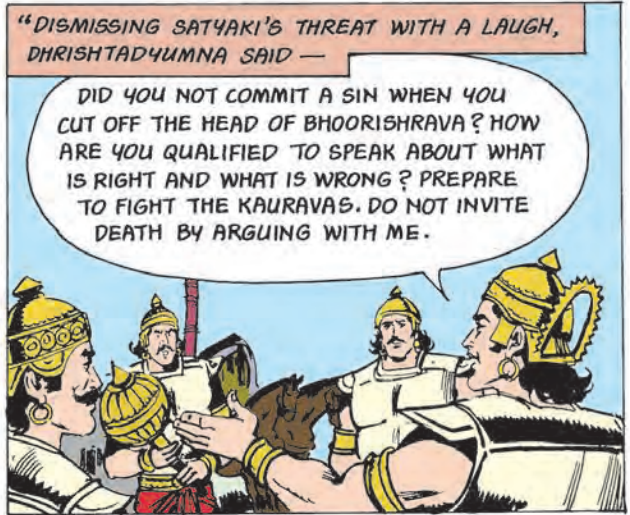
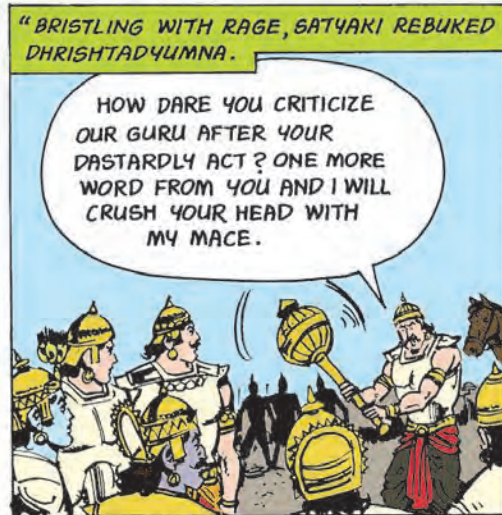
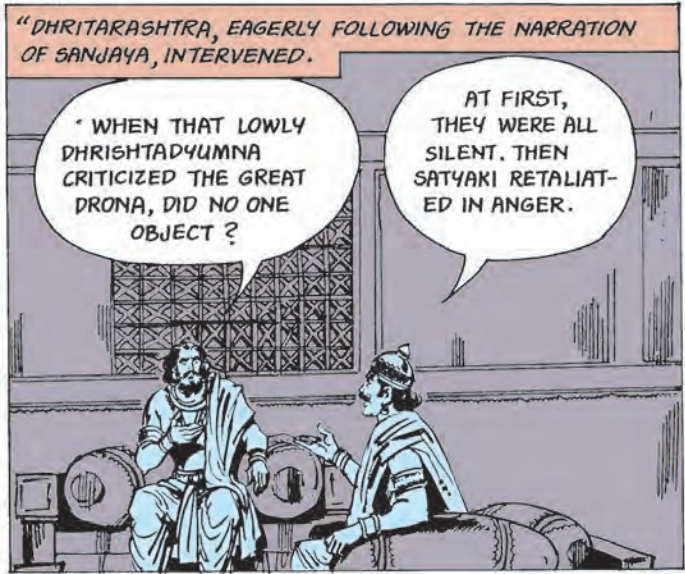
ARJUNA, YOU ARE FULL OF PRAISE FOR DRONA NOW. BUT YOU FORGET DRONA HAD FORSAKEN HIS DHARMA AS A BRAHMANA. HE PERFORMED NONE OF THE DUTIES* EXPECTED OF A BRAHMANA.



WAS IT FAIR ON HIS PART TO USE DIVINE WEAPONS ON HELPLESS SOLDIERS?



* ASSISTING IN SACRIFICES, PERFORMING SACRIFICES, GIVING AWAY GIFTS, RECEIVING GIFTS, TEACHING AND STUDYING.



"SAHADEVA ADDRESSED THE TWO HEROES —

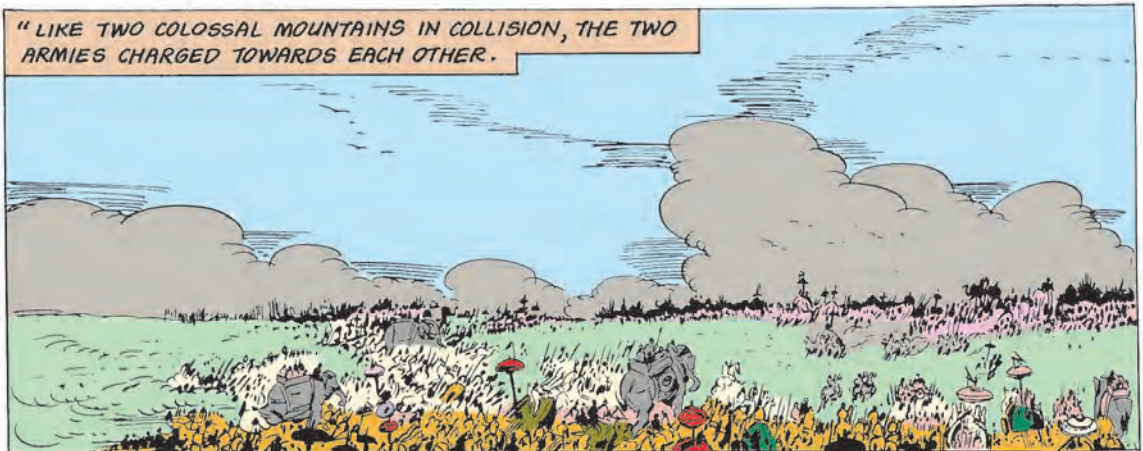
COME ! SHED
YOUR ANGER AND
FORGIVE EACH
OTHER.



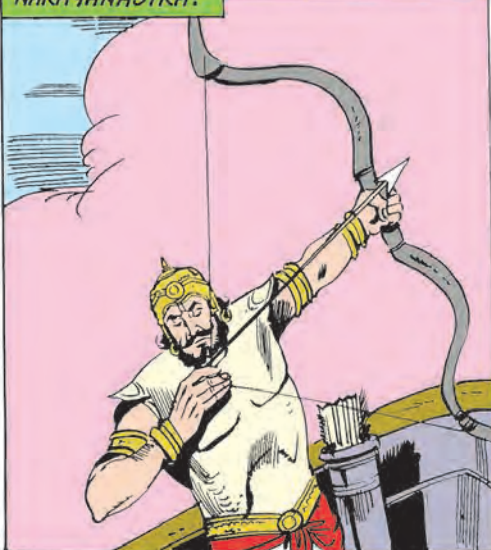
"KRISHNA AND YUDHISHTHIRA FINALLY MANAGED TO
PACIFY THE TWO AND THE PANDAVAS PREPARED TO
CONFRONT THE ENEMY AGAIN.



"LIKE TWO COLOSSAL MOUNTAINS IN COLLISION, THE TWO
ARMIES CHARGED TOWARDS EACH OTHER.



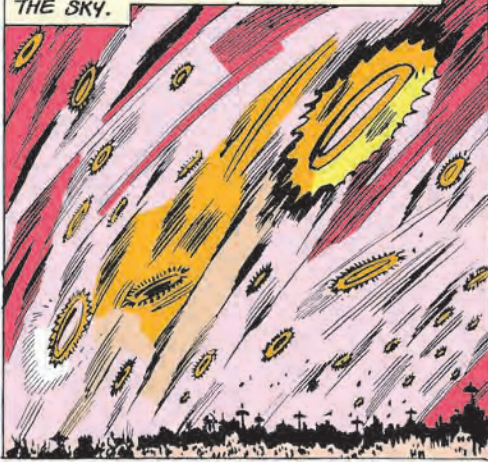
"JUST THEN ASHWATTHAMA INVOKED THE
NARAYANASTRA.



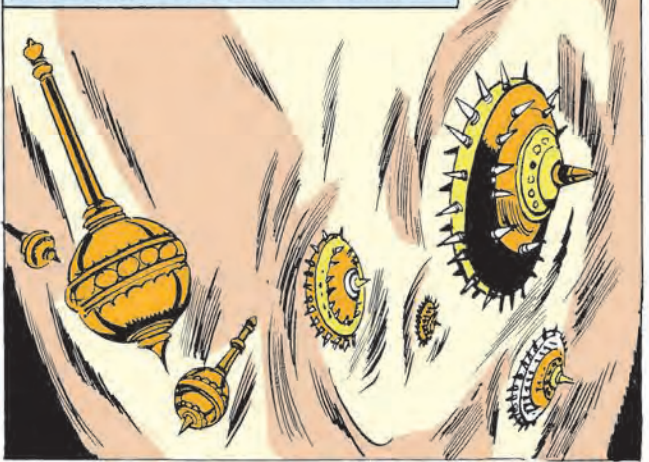
"THOUSANDS OF ARROWS SPRANG FORTH FROM THE
WEAPON AND CLOUDED THE SKY.



"EVEN AS THE ARROWS FELL ON THE PANDAVAS LIKE GLOWING SERPENTS, MANY A RADIANT DISC APPEARED IN THE SKY.



"STRANGE AND OMINOUS-LOOKING WEAPONS FOLLOWED. THE MORE THE PANDAVA FORCES OPPOSED IT, THE MORE POWERFUL THE ASTRA BECAME.



"SEEING HIS TROOPS BEING DECIMATED BY THE NARAYANASTRA, YUDHISHTHIRA SAID —



DHRISHTADYUMNA!
TAKE THE PANCHALA
ARMY AND FLEE!
SATYAKI, YOU TOO
GO HOME.

"ADDRESSING THE SOLDIERS, HE SAID —



DESIST FROM
FIGHTING, I TOO
WILL ENTER THE
FIRE AND END
MY LIFE.

"JUST THEN, KRISHNA SIGNALLED TO THE PANDAVA FORCES.



BRAVE WARRIORS, ALIGHT FROM
YOUR VEHICLES AND THROW YOUR
WEAPONS DOWN! THE ONLY WAY TO
ESCAPE THE FURY OF THIS CELESTIAL
WEAPON IS TO STAND UNARMED
ON THE GROUND.

"AS THE WARRIORS DISMOUNTED, KRISHNA EXPLAINED—

THE MORE YOU
OPPOSE IT, THE MORE
POWERFUL THE ASTRA
WILL BECOME. YOU MUST
INSTEAD BOW BEFORE
ITS MIGHT.



"THUS DIRECTED BY KRISHNA, THE PANDAVA WARRIORS
GOT READY TO RENOUNCE THE WEAPONS AND EVEN THE
VERY THOUGHT OF THEM.

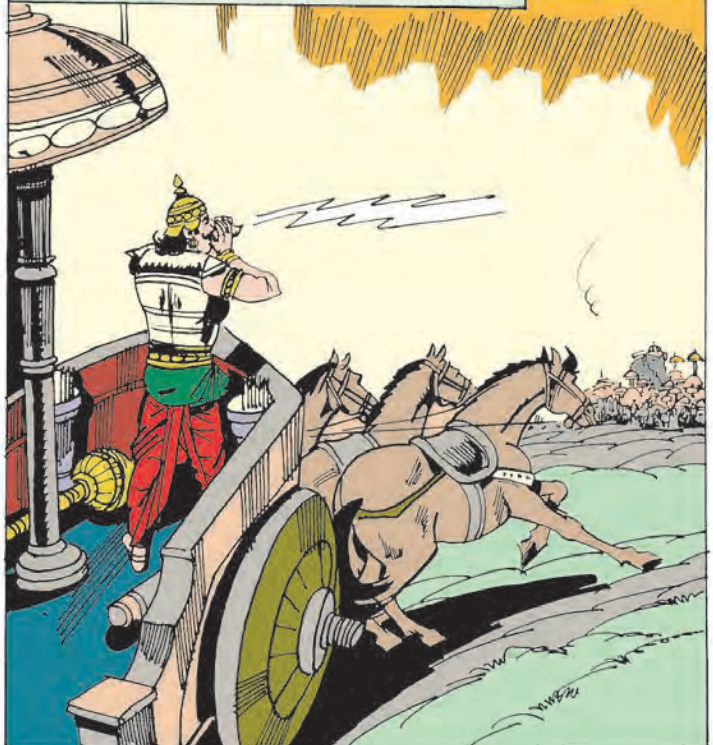


"BHEEMA ALONE WAS DEFIANT.

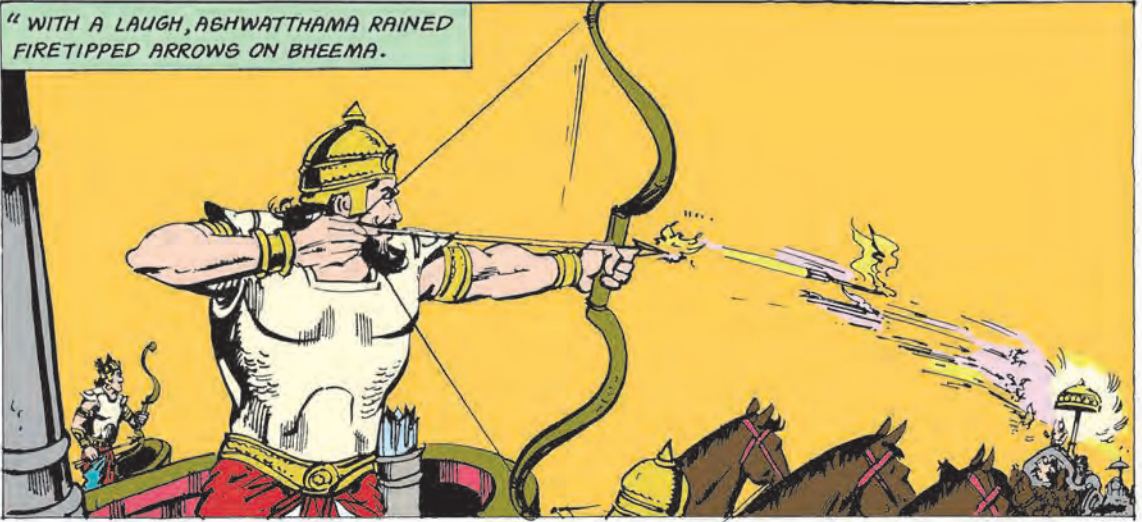
LIKE THE SUN,
I STAND UNEQUALLED.
I WILL OPPOSE THE
NARAYANASTRA
EVEN IF NO ONE
HAS DONE SO
BEFORE.



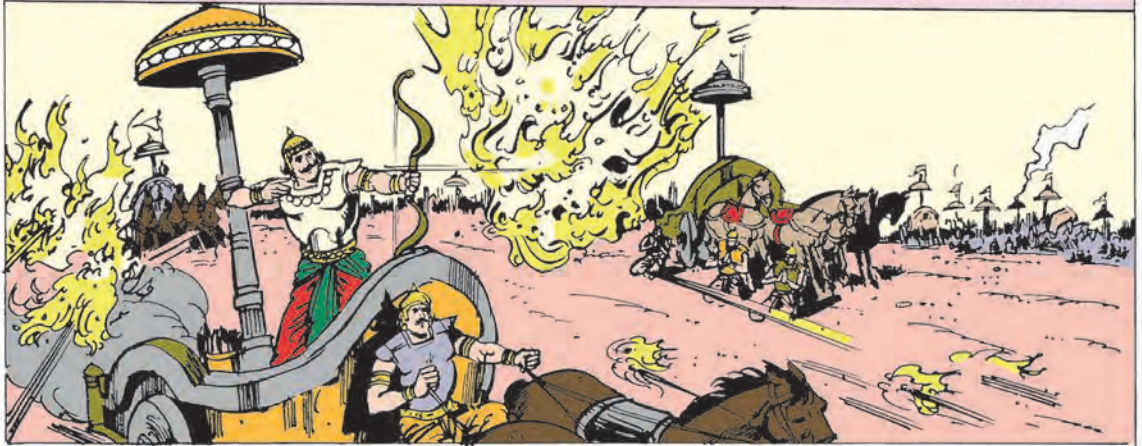
"AS HE SET FORTH ON HIS CHARIOT TOWARDS ASHWATTHAMA,
THE KAURAVAS PELTED HIM WITH ARROWS.



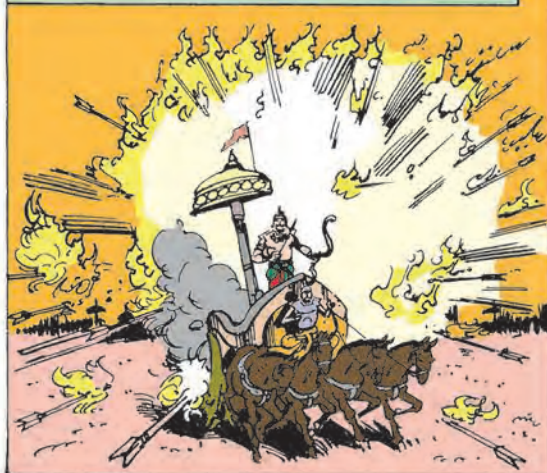
"WITH A LAUGH, ASHWATTHAMA RAINED FIRE-TIPPED ARROWS ON BHEEMA.



"BHEEMA RESEMBLED A MIGHTY MOUNTAIN COVERED WITH FIRE-FLIES. WHEN HE TRIED TO COUNTER ASHWATTHAMA'S ATTACK WITH HIS OWN ARROWS, THE SPARKLES TURNED TO A FLAMING FIRE. AT THIS THE FRIGHTENED PANDAVA SOLDIERS QUICKLY PROSTRATED THEMSELVES ON THE GROUND.



"WHEN THEY BECAME INACTIVE, THE BRUNT OF THE NARAYANASTRA FELL ON BHEEMA.

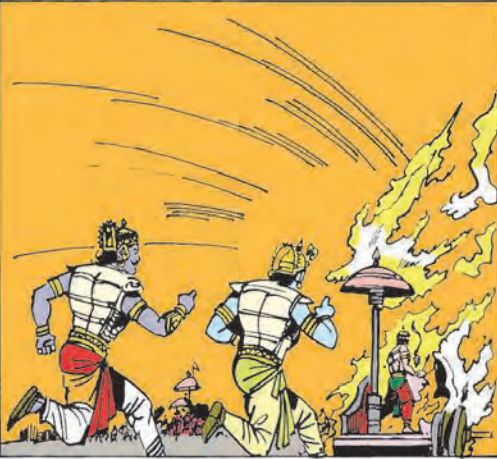


"NOW HIS CHARIOT, CHARIOTEER AND HORSES WERE ALL ENVELOPED IN FLAMES. EVEN ARJUNA'S VARUNA* WAS INEFFECTIVE IN QUENCHING THE FIRE.

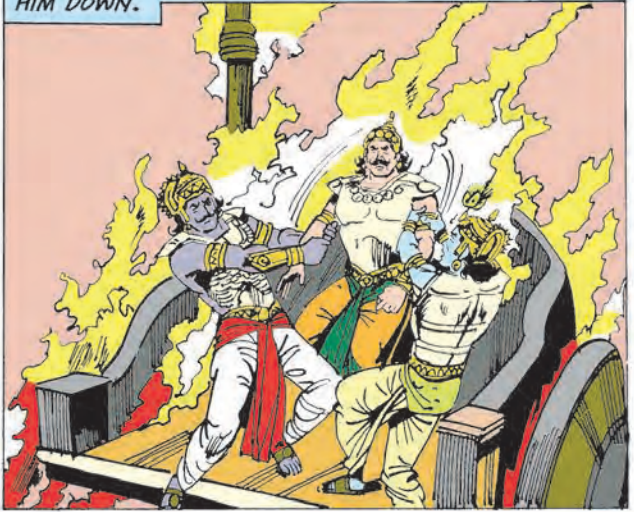


* CELESTIAL WEAPON OF VARUNA, LORD OF THE SEA.

"KRISHNA AND ARJUNA JUMPED DOWN FROM THEIR CHARIOT AND RUSHED TOWARDS BHEEMA LEAVING THEIR ARMS BEHIND."



"THEY WRENCHED OFF HIS WEAPONS AND PULLED HIM DOWN."



"BUT BHEEMA WAS STUBBORN. HE LET OUT A LION ROAR WHICH AGAIN AUGMENTED THE EFFECT OF THE ASTRA. KRISHNA REBUKED HIM."

WHY DO YOU NOT LISTEN, BHEEMA! STOP FIGHTING NOW.



"BOTH KRISHNA AND ARJUNA HELD BHEEMA DOWN TILL THE ASTRA PASSED OVER THEIR HEADS."



"THE AIR COOLED DOWN AND THE SOLDIERS AND ANIMALS REVIVED."



"AS THE PANDAVA FORCES PREPARED TO RESUME THE FIGHT, DURYODHANA TOLD ASHWATTHAMA —"

COME ON! SEND THAT WEAPON AGAIN. HURRY!



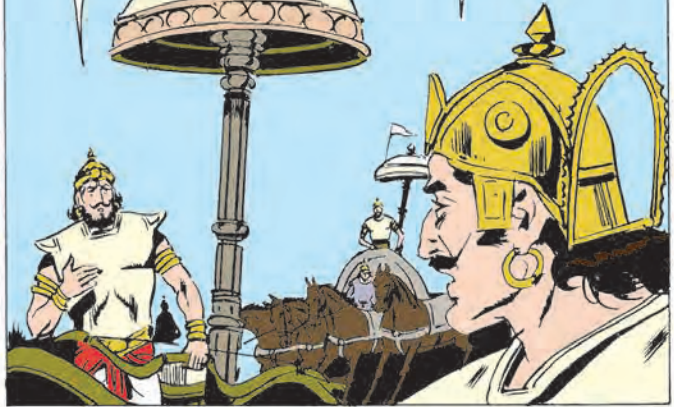
"ASHWATTHAMA REPLIED WITH A DEEP SIGH—

ALAS! NEITHER DOES THIS WEAPON RETURN NOR CAN IT BE INVOKED AGAIN. IF I TRY TO RECALL IT, IT WILL CERTAINLY DESTROY US.



HAD KRISHNA NOT DISCLOSED THE SECRET OF QUELLING THE NARAYANA STRA, WE WOULD HAVE DESTROYED ALL OUR ENEMIES TODAY.

THEN USE THE OTHER CELESTIAL WEAPONS AT YOUR DISPOSAL.



"ASHWATTHAMA SET OUT TO ATTACK DHRISHTADYUMNA.



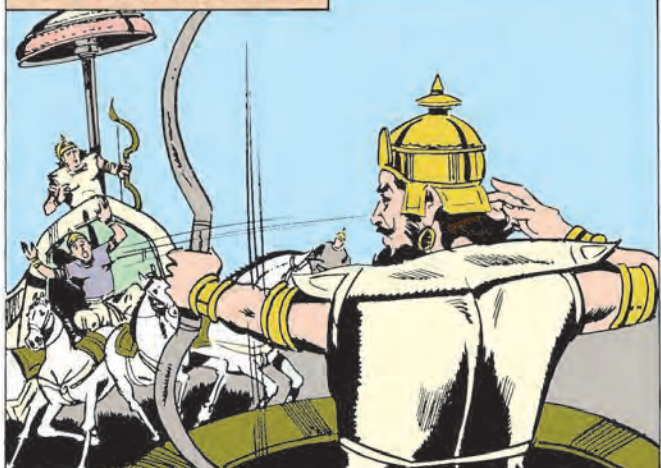
"WITH TWENTY-FIVE PIERCING ARROWS, HE WOUNDED DHRISHTADYUMNA.



"ON RECOVERING, DHRISHTADYUMNA RAINED COUNTLESS ARROWS IN RETURN.



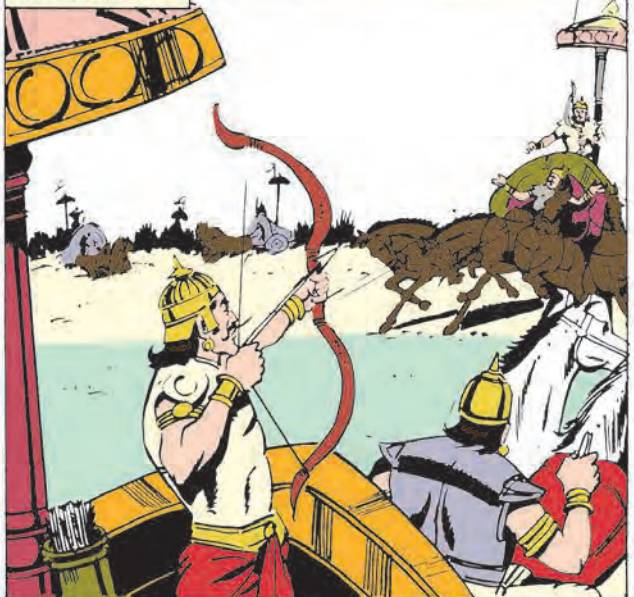
"BUT NOT FOR LONG. SOON ASHWATTHAMA KILLED HIS HORSES AND CHARIOTEER.



"SATYAKI THEN CAME TO DHRISHTADYUMNA'S RESCUE."



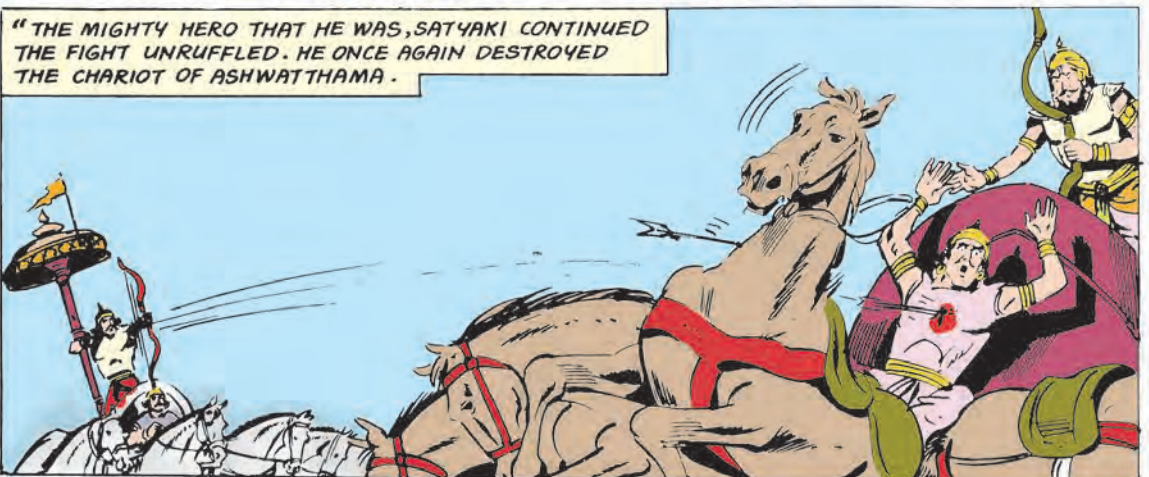
"WITH WELL AIMED ARROWS, SATYAKI KILLED ASHWATTHAMA'S CHARIOTEER AND DESTROYED HIS CHARIOT."



"WHEN DURYODHANA, KRIPA AND KARNA CAME TO HIM, ASHWATTHAMA ASCENDED ANOTHER CHARIOT."



"THE MIGHTY HERO THAT HE WAS, SATYAKI CONTINUED THE FIGHT UNRUFFLED. HE ONCE AGAIN DESTROYED THE CHARIOT OF ASHWATTHAMA."



"LAUGHING ASHWATTHAMA WARNED SATYAKI —

I KNOW YOU HAVE A SOFT
CORNER FOR DHRISHTADYUMNA.
BUT TODAY NEITHER OF YOU
WILL ESCAPE ME.



"SEEING SATYAKI BEING THUS TORMENTED,
FIVE MIGHTY PANDAVA WARRIORS CAME
TO HIS AID.



"BHEEMA AND ASHWATTHAMA WERE SOON
ENGAGED IN WELL-MATCHED BATTLE.



"ASHWATTHAMA INJURED BHEEMA'S
CHARIOTEER. RELEASED FROM THE REINS,
HIS HORSES TOOK BHEEMA AWAY.



"ARJUNA HAILED ASHWATTHAMA —

LET ME SEE YOUR VALOUR,
YOUR STRENGTH, YOUR PROWESS.
COME ! DISPLAY YOUR LOVE OF THE
KAURAVAS AND YOUR HATRED
FOR US. TODAY, I WILL CRUSH
YOUR PRIDE.



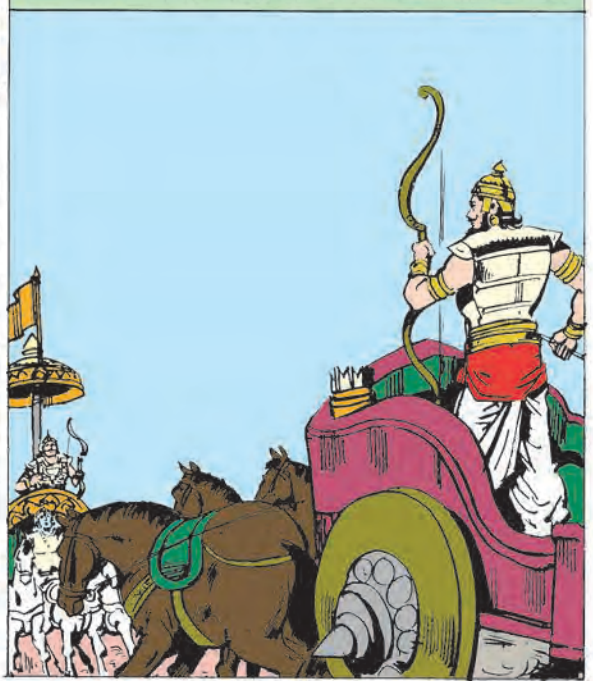
"DHRTARASHTRA WAS SURPRISED TO HEAR THIS. HE INTERRUPTED SANJAYA'S NARRATION.

BUT ARJUNA AND ASHWATTHAMA HAD ALWAYS BEEN FRIENDS. WHY WAS ARJUNA SO RUDE TO HIM ?

HE WAS DEEPLY HURT BY THE CRITICISM HURLED AT HIM, THE DEFEAT OF BHEEMA, SATYAKI AND DHRSHTADYUMNA HAD ALSO MADE HIM UNHAPPY.



"ASHWATTHAMA TOOK UP ARJUNA'S CHALLENGE.



"IMPATIENT TO KILL ARJUNA, HE INVOKED THE AGNEYASTRA.*



"NO SOONER HAD THE CELESTIAL WEAPON BEEN RELEASED THAN THE SKY RAINED DOWN ARROWS AND METEORS AND FLAMES OF FIRE ONTO THE BATTLEFIELD WHICH WAS SUDDENLY PLUNGED IN DARKNESS.



"ARJUNA THEN USED THE BRAHMASTRA WHICH SUBDUES THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPONS.



* CELESTIAL WEAPON BELONGING TO AGNI, LORD OF FIRE.

"COUNTERED BY THE BRAHMASTRA, THE DARKNESS LIFTED AND THE AIR COOLED DOWN. THE DEVASTATING EFFECT OF THE AGNEYASTRA ON THE PANDAVA FORCES NOW BECAME VISIBLE."



"BUT ARJUNA AND KRISHNA ESCAPED UNSCATHED. THIS PLUNGED ASHWATTHAMA IN A GLOOM OF DESPAIR."



"THROWING AWAY HIS BOW HE JUMPED OFF HIS CHARIOT."



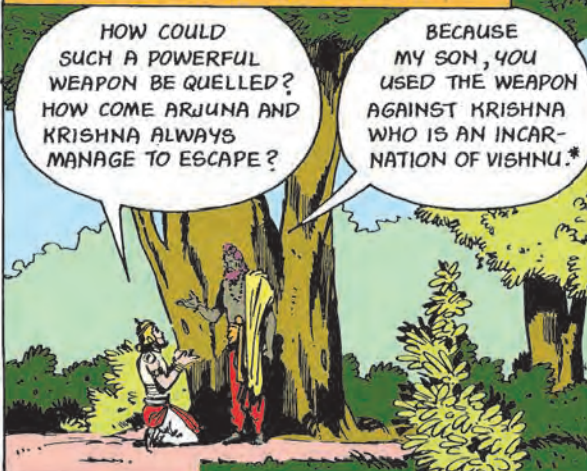
SHAME ON ME!
ALL MY EFFORTS
ARE FUTILE.

"AS HE WAS RUNNING OFF THE BATTLEFIELD FULL OF DESPAIR, HE CAME ACROSS SAGE VYASA."



OH, WISE ONE!
WHERE DID I GO
WRONG? WHY
DID THE WEAPON
FAIL ME?

"POURING OUT HIS WOE, HE CONTINUED —



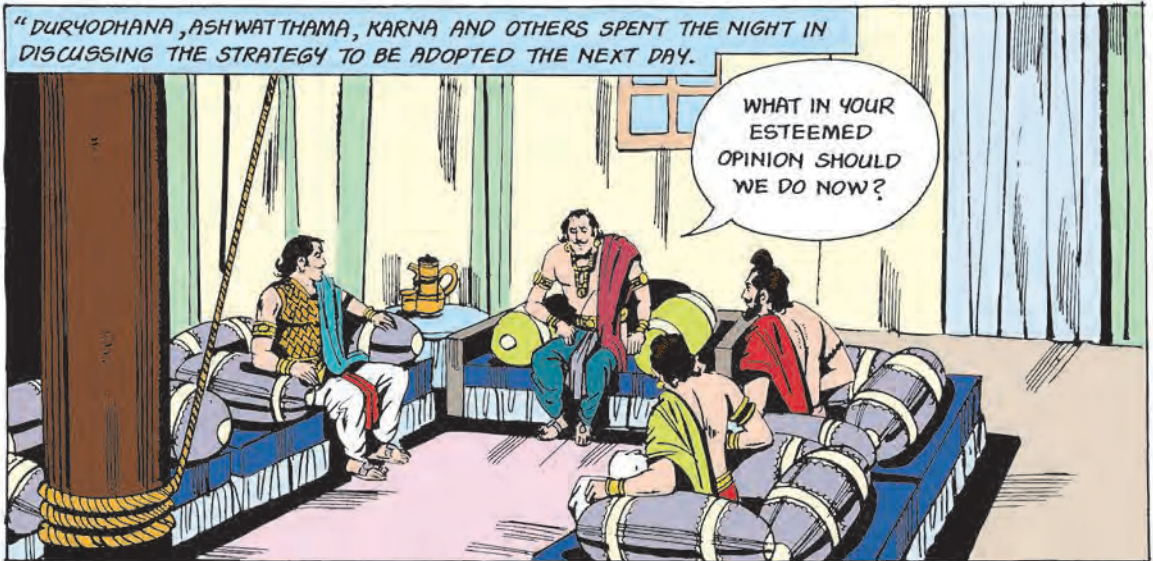
HOW COULD
SUCH A POWERFUL
WEAPON BE QUELLED?
HOW COME ARJUNA AND
KRISHNA ALWAYS
MANAGE TO ESCAPE?

BECAUSE
MY SON, YOU
USED THE WEAPON
AGAINST KRISHNA
WHO IS AN INCAR-
NATION OF VISHNU.*

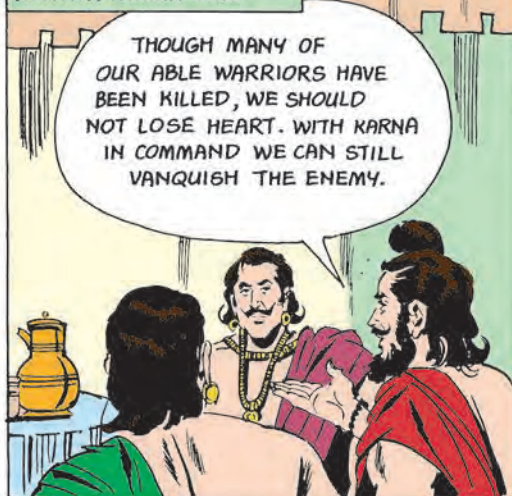
"ON HEARING THIS, ASHWATTHAMA BADE HIS ARMY TO GO BACK TO THE CAMP."



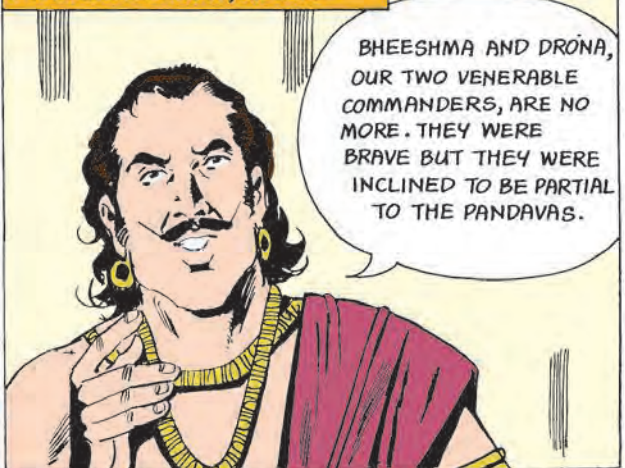
"DURYODHANA, ASHWATTHAMA, KARNA AND OTHERS SPENT THE NIGHT IN DISCUSSING THE STRATEGY TO BE ADOPTED THE NEXT DAY.



"ASHWATTHAMA SAID —



"HIS WORDS WERE ENCOURAGING TO DURYODHANA, ADDRESSING KARNA, HE SAID —



YOU ARE SURELY THE BEST MAN TO LEAD OUR FORCES NOW. YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT OUR WELFARE. COME! TAKE CHARGE OF THE ARMY.

I WILL BE GLAD TO DO SO. CONSIDER THE PANDAVAS ALREADY DEFEATED.



"KARNA WAS FORMALLY INSTALLED AS THE THIRD COMMANDER OF THE KAURAVAS.



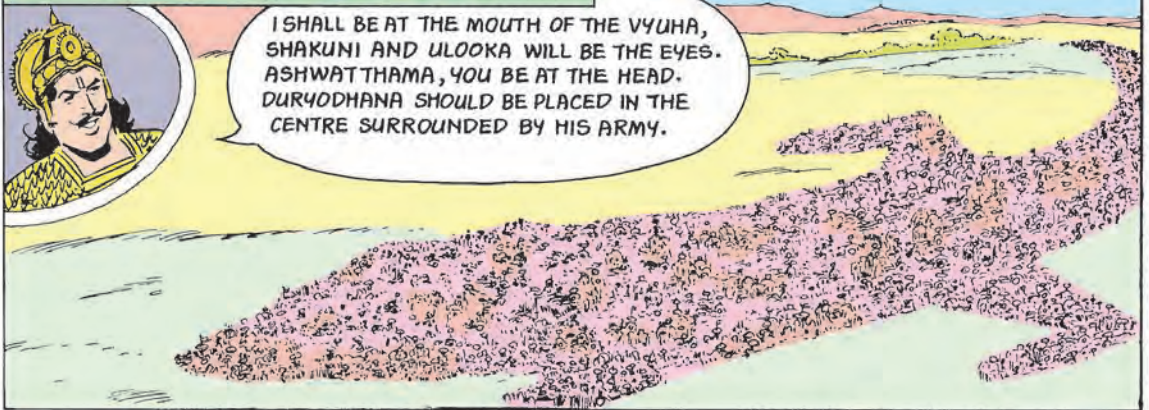
"ON THE MORNING OF THE SIXTEENTH DAY, THE KAURAVA CAMP RESOUNDED WITH THE VOICE OF KARNA. HE ARRANGED THE FORCES IN THE MAKARA VYUHA.*



"THE INSTRUCTIONS HE GAVE WERE VERY CLEAR.



I SHALL BE AT THE MOUTH OF THE VYUHA,
SHAKUNI AND ULOOKA WILL BE THE EYES.
ASHWATTHAMA, YOU BE AT THE HEAD.
DURYODHANA SHOULD BE PLACED IN THE
CENTRE SURROUNDED BY HIS ARMY.



"YUDHISHTHIRA REMARKED TO ARJUNA —

ARJUNA, BEHOLD THE
KAURAVAS BELEFT OF THEIR
MIGHTY WARRIORS, KARNA
IS THE ONLY HERO LEFT.

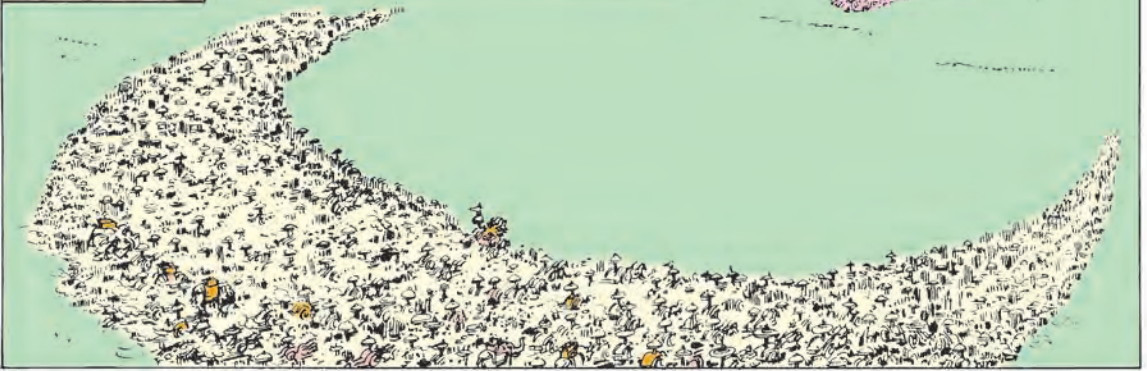


TODAY IT MUST BE
YOUR AIM TO KILL HIM.
ARRANGE OUR FORCES
ACCORDINGLY.

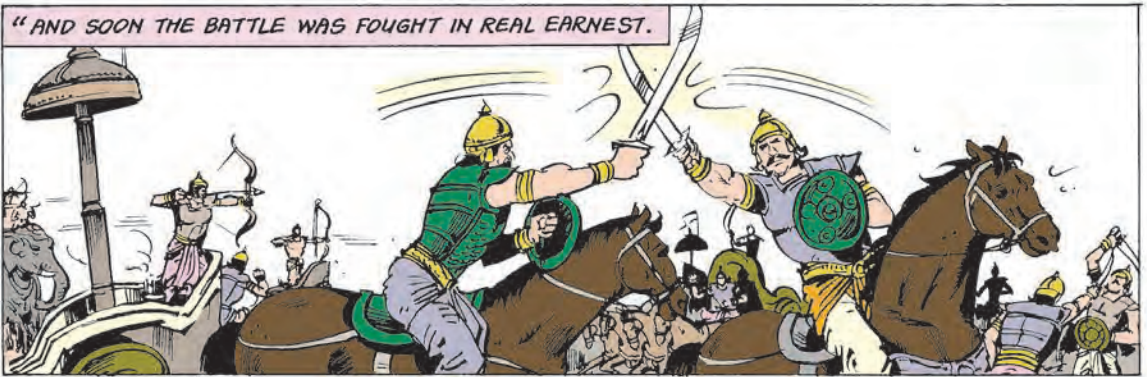
I WILL ARRANGE
OUR MEN IN THE
SHAPE OF A
CRESCENT.



"ARJUNA ARRAYED THE FORCES TO RESEMBLE A HALF MOON WITH BHEEMA ON THE LEFT AND DHRISTADYUMNA ON THE RIGHT."



"AND SOON THE BATTLE WAS FOUGHT IN REAL EARNEST."



"FIERCE WAS THE DUEL BETWEEN ASHWATTHAMA AND BHEEMA."



"AFTER A VIGOROUS EXCHANGE OF ARROWS, THEY MADE EACH OTHER FAINT."



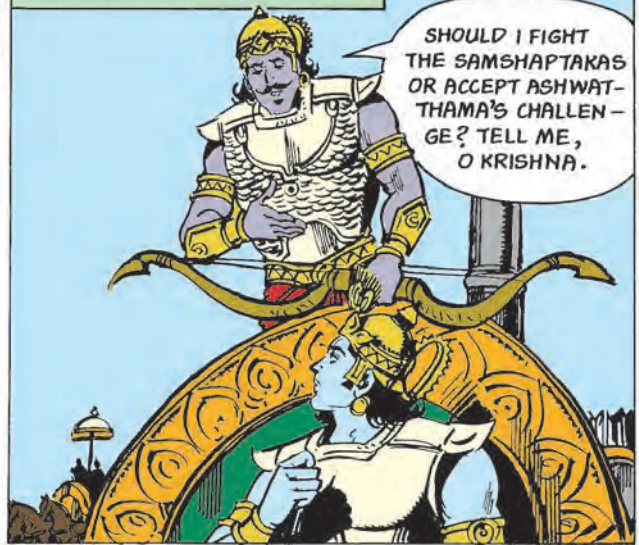
"ARJUNA WAS MEANWHILE WRECKING DESTRUCTION AMONG THE SAMSHAPTAKAS WHO HAD CHALLENGED HIM ONCE AGAIN."



"EVEN AS HE KEPT REDUCING THEIR NUMBERS, ASHWATTHAMA CALLED OUT TO HIM FROM ANOTHER DIRECTION.



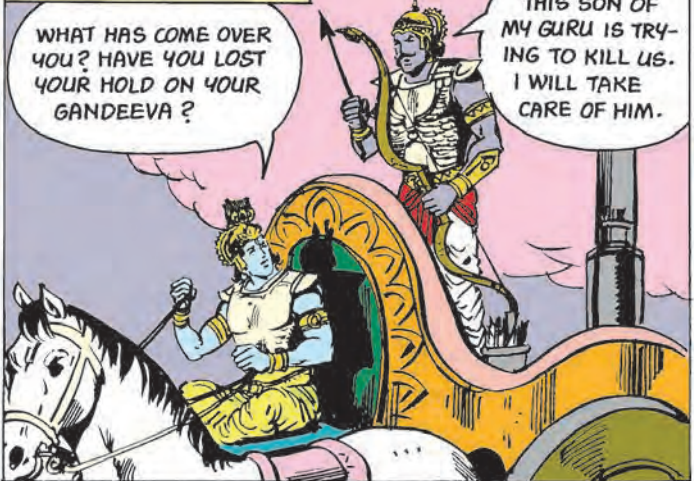
"ARJUNA CONSULTED KRISHNA.



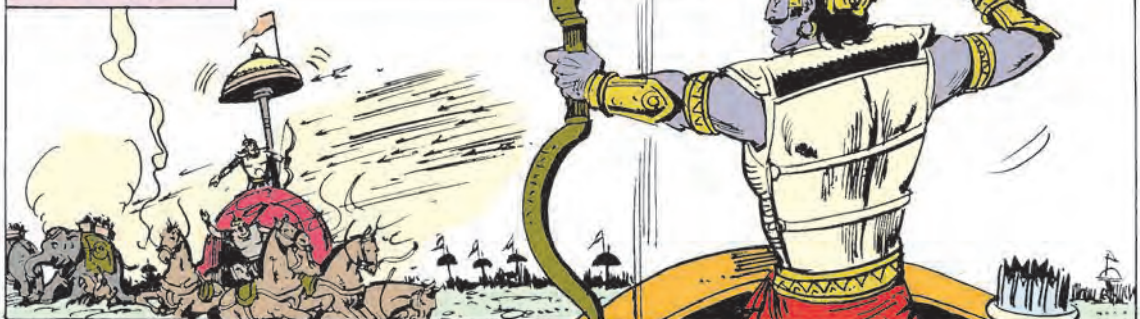
"IN RESPONSE, KRISHNA LED THE CHARIOT TOWARDS ASHWATTHAMA. A FURIOUS FIGHT ENSUED.



"SEEING ASHWATTHAMA GAINING AN EDGE OVER ARJUNA, KRISHNA SAID—



"THE FURY WITH WHICH ARJUNA THEN SHOT HIS ARROWS PIERCED NOT ONLY ASHWATTHAMA'S HORSES AND CHARIOT, BUT ALSO FELLED THE ELEPHANTS AND SOLDIERS WHO WERE FAR AWAY.



"GRIEVOUSLY INJURED, ASHWATTHAMA'S HORSES FLED THE FIELD, CARRYING THE CHARIOT AWAY WITH THEM.

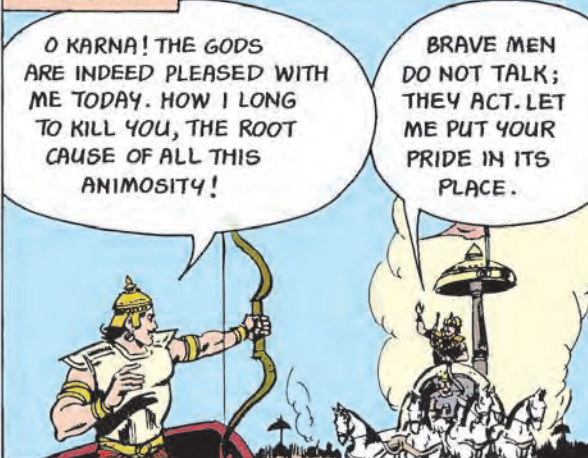


"AS HE WAS LED AWAY FROM THE FIELD, ASHWATTHAMA REFLECTED.



KRISHNA AND ARJUNA ARE BOUND TO BE VICTORIOUS. I WILL NOT CONFRONT ARJUNA AGAIN. LET ME INSTEAD JOIN KARNA'S FORCES.

"KARNA WAS BUSY CONFRONTING NAKULA'S ONSLAUGHT.



O KARNA! THE GODS ARE INDEED PLEASED WITH ME TODAY. HOW I LONG TO KILL YOU, THE ROOT CAUSE OF ALL THIS ANIMOSITY!

BRAVE MEN DO NOT TALK; THEY ACT. LET ME PUT YOUR PRIDE IN ITS PLACE.

"KARNA ACTED OUT HIS THREAT AND UNABLE TO CONTAIN HIS ATTACK, NAKULA TRIED TO ESCAPE. KARNA LAUGHED AND SAID:



DO YOU REALISE YOU WERE BOASTING IN VAIN? RUN AWAY NOW.

"BY NOON WHILE KARNA CIRCLED THE BATTLEFIELD CAUSING HAVOC AND DESTRUCTION, SEVERAL DUELS WERE BEING FOUGHT.

"QUYUTSU FOUGHT ULOOKA.



"KRIPA CONFRONTED DHRISTADYUMNA TO AVENGE THE DEATH OF DRONA.



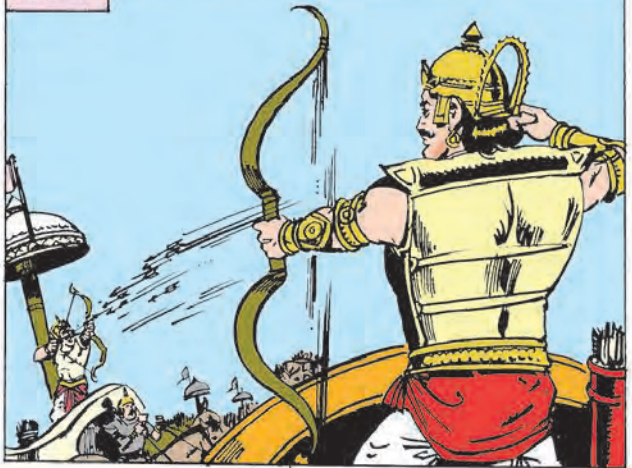
"KRITAVARMA'S ARROW PIERCED SHIKHANDI'S ARMOUR AND, AS HE FAINTED, HE HELD ON TO THE FLAGPOST.



"ARJUNA WAS IN HIS ELEMENT DESTROYING THE SAMSHAPATAKAS WHO HAD ESCAPED HIS FURY EARLIER.



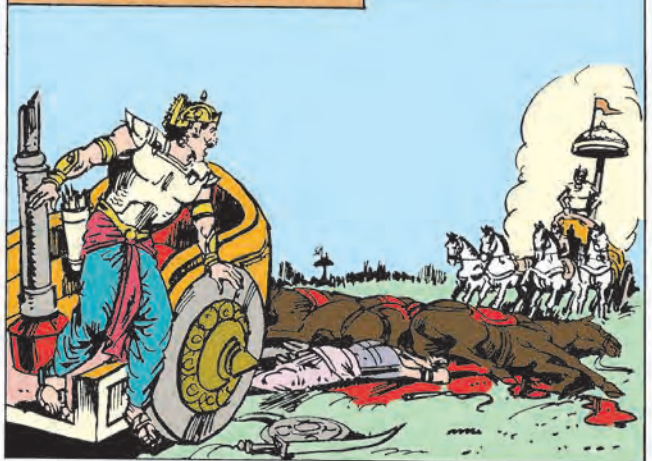
"DURYODHANA'S CONFRONTATION WITH YUDHISHTHIRA WAS IN KEEPING WITH A BRAVE KING. BUT NOT FOR LONG.



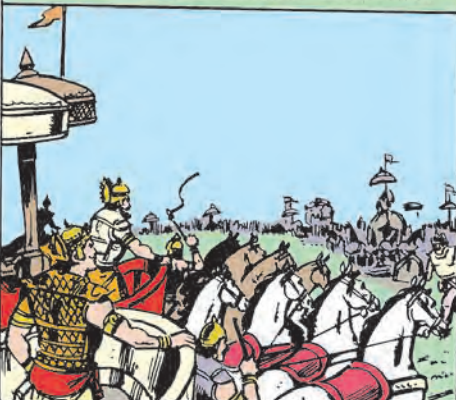
"WITH FOUR WELL-ARMED ARROWS, YUDHISHTHIRA KILLED DURYODHANA'S FOUR HORSES; WITH THE FIFTH ARROW, HE BEHEADED THE CHARIOTEER. WITH THE SIXTH, THE BANNER...



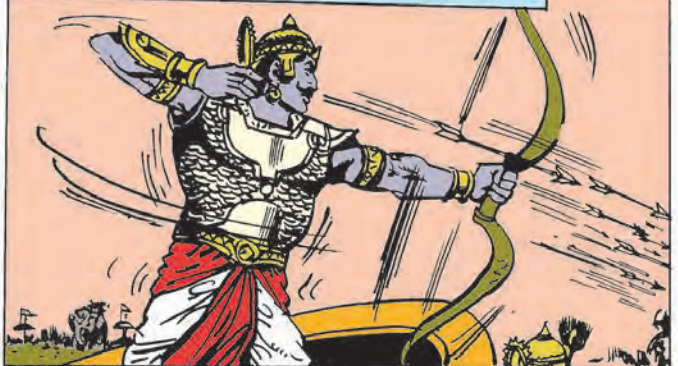
"...WITH THE SEVENTH, HE BROKE DURYODHANA'S BOW, AND WITH THE EIGHTH, HE SEVERED THE SWORD FROM DURYODHANA'S HAND.



"SEEING HIS PLIGHT, KARNA, ASHWATTHAMA AND KRIPA RUSHED TO HIS AID. SOON THE FIGHT BECAME GENERAL.



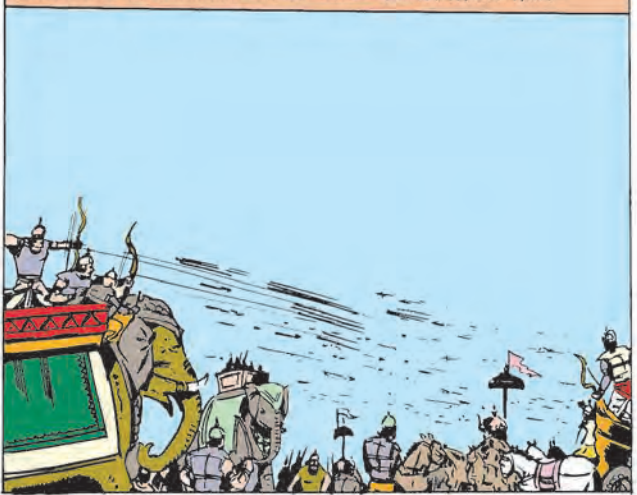
"SO SWIFTLY DID ARJUNA SHOOT HIS ARROWS THAT THE SKY AS WELL AS THE EIGHT DIRECTIONS SEEMED TO BE FILLED WITH THE ARROWS RELEASED BY HIS GANDEEVA. HE SEEMED TO BE DANCING IN HIS CHARIOT.



"AFTER INFLECTING DEFEAT ON DURYODHANA, ASHWATTHAMA AND KRITAVARMA, ARJUNA TURNED TO KARNA.



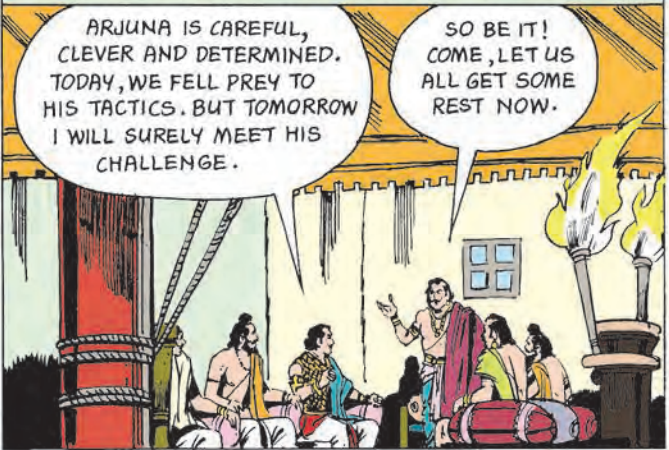
"WHEN KARNA'S SHARP ARROWS FOUND THEIR MARK AND WOUNDED BOTH ARJUNA AND KRISHNA, THE PANDAVA WARRIORS GATHERED TO ATTACK HIM.



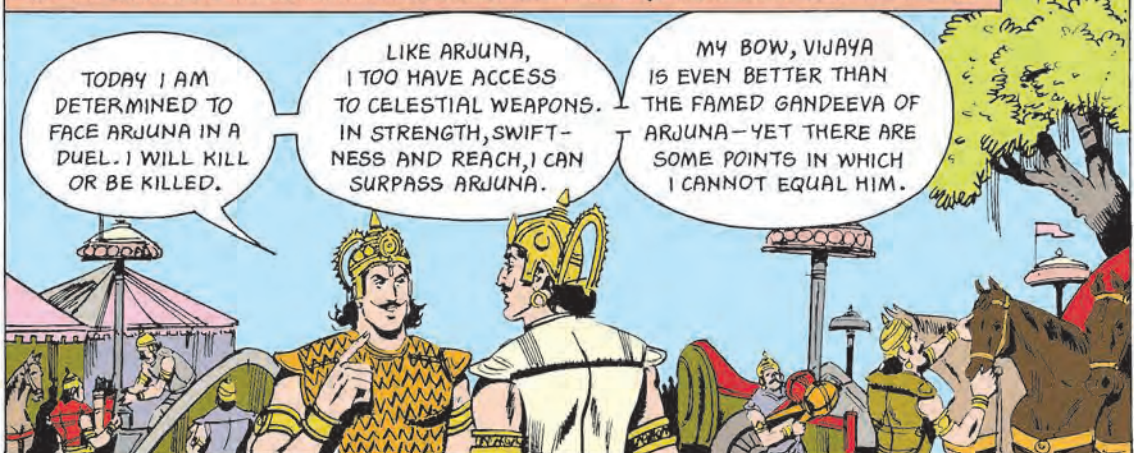
"AT SUNSET, THE SOLDIERS BEGAN TO RETURN TO THEIR CAMP.

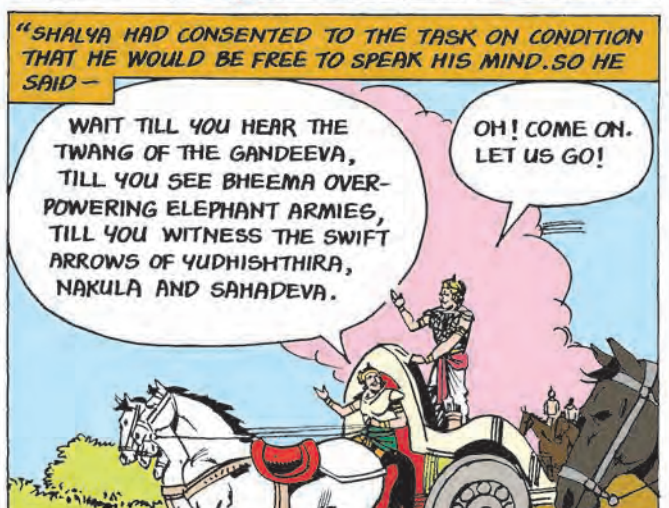
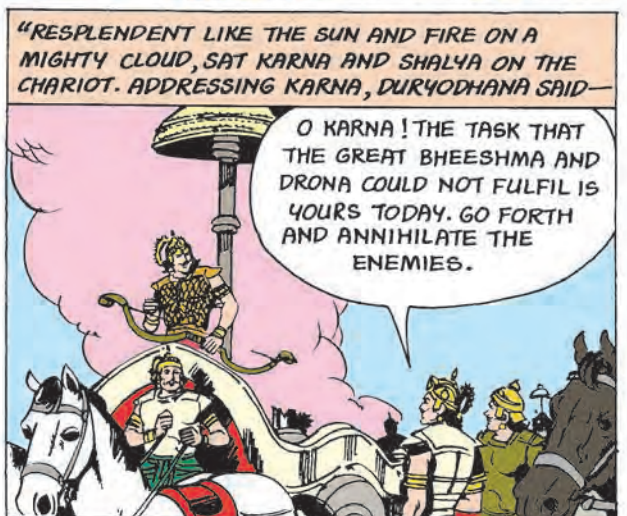
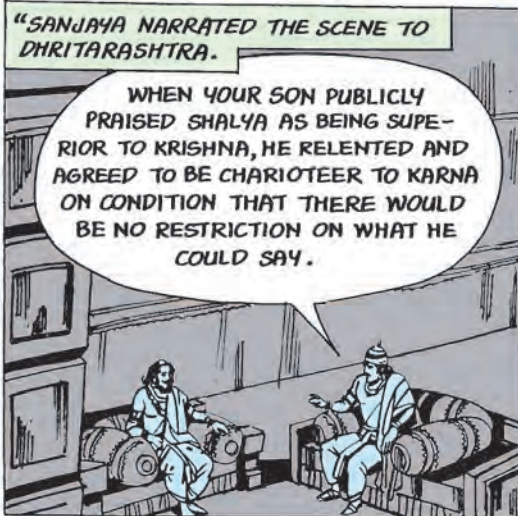
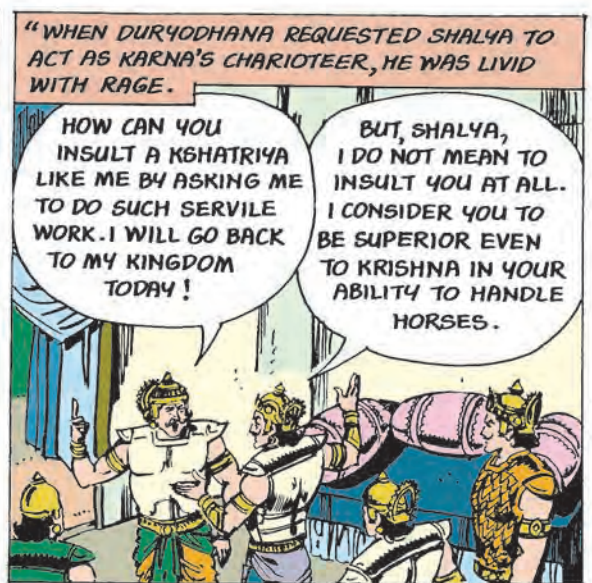


"WHEN THE KAURAVA WARRIORS GATHERED TO DISCUSS THE STRATEGY FOR THE NEXT DAY, KARNA DECLARED—



"ON THE DAWN OF THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF THE BATTLE, KARNA CAME TO DURYODHANA.





"AS THEY PROCEEDED TOWARDS THE BATTLEFIELD, SHALYA CONTINUED TO EXTOL ARJUNA'S VIRTUES.

LIKE THE SUN AND THE MOON ARE KRISHNA AND ARJUNA. YOU ARE A MERE FIREFLY IN COMPARISON.

I PROMISED TO ALLOW YOU TO SPEAK FREELY, OTHERWISE...



"BUT WHEN THEY CONTINUED TO EXCHANGE INSULTS DURYODHANA INTERVENED—

KARNA, PLEASE STOP ARGUING. SHALYA, I REQUEST YOU TO PUT AN END TO THIS FUTILE TALK.

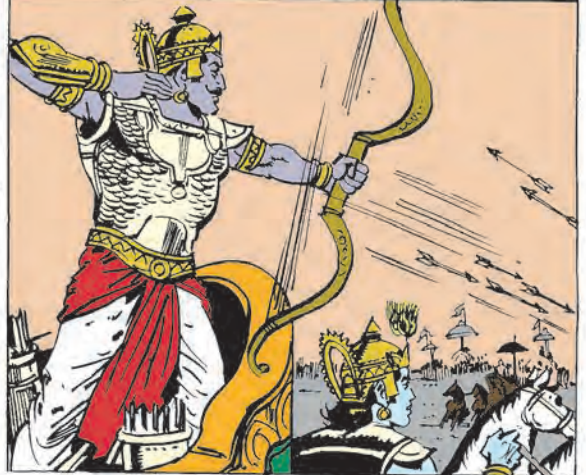


"SEEING THE COMPLEX FORMATION OF THE KAURAVAS, YUDHISHTHIRA ASKED ARJUNA TO ARRAY THEIR FORCES IN A SUITABLE FORMATION.

ARJUNA, YOU ATTACK KARNA. BHEEMA WILL CONFRONT DURYODHANA. NAKULA WILL FACE VRISHASENA*, SAHADEVA WILL MEET SHAKUNI AND DHRISTA-DYUMNA WILL FIGHT ASHWATTHAMA. I WILL FIGHT KRIPACHARYA.



"WHEN THE SAMSHAPATAKAS CALLED OUT TO ARJUNA, HE ATTACKED THEM SINGLE-HANDED.



"AFTER THEIR NUMBERS BECAME DEPLETED, HE RAGED THROUGH THE KAURAVA FORCES LIKE FURY INCARNATE.



"KARNA TOO WAS IN HIS ELEMENT. HE RESEMBLED INDRA DEMOLISHING THE ASURAS.



* KARNA'S SON.

"YUDHISHTHIRA APPROACHED HIM.

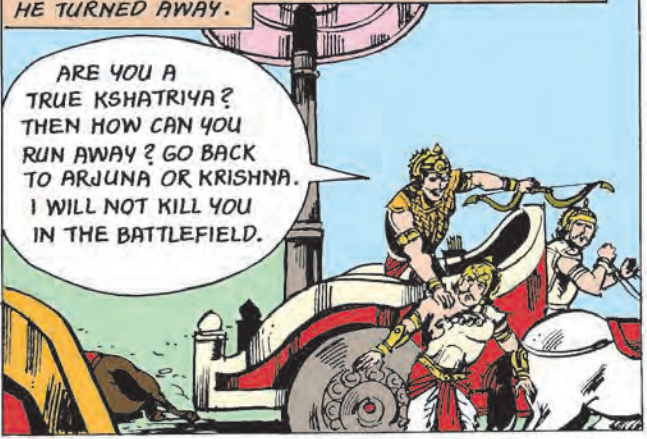
LET ME SEE
YOUR FAMED
PROWESS. SHOW
ME HOW POWER-
FUL YOU ARE.

I WILL BE
TOO GLAD
TO DO SO.



"ALTHOUGH SATYAKI AND OTHERS CAME TO HELP YUDHISHTHIRA, KARNA ROUTED THEM ALL. WHEN YUDHISHTHIRA'S ARMOUR WAS TORN ASUNDER, HE TURNED AWAY.

ARE YOU A
TRUE KSHATRIYA?
THEN HOW CAN YOU
RUN AWAY? GO BACK
TO ARJUNA OR KRISHNA.
I WILL NOT KILL YOU
IN THE BATTLEFIELD.



"BHEEMA WAS ENRAGED AT YUDHISHTHIRA'S INSULT. UNDER HIS ATTACK, KARNA FAINTED.

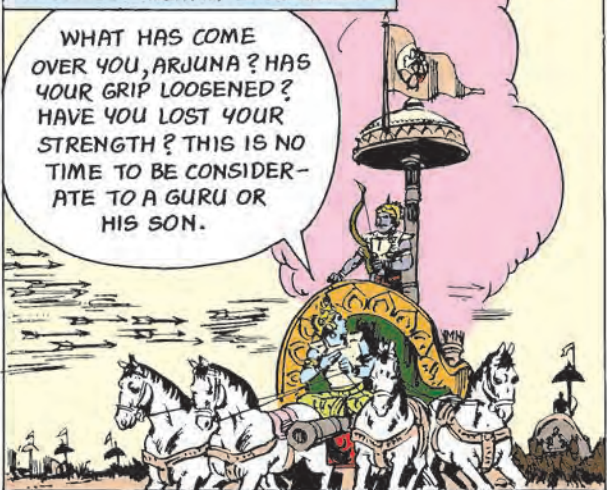
I WILL CUT OFF
HIS TONGUE FOR
INSULTING MY
BROTHER AND
KING.

RESTRAIN YOUR-
SELF BHEEMA.
REMEMBER, KILL-
ING KARNA IS THE
TASK OF ARJUNA.

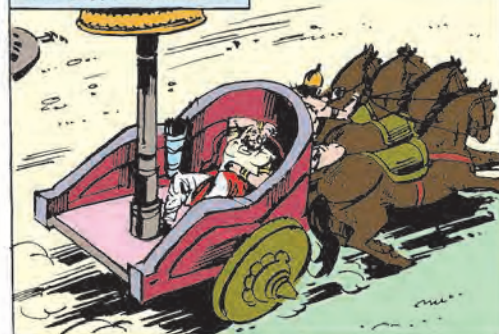


"MEANWHILE ASHWATTHAMA CHALLENGED ARJUNA TO A DUEL AND COVERED HIM WITH ARROWS. KRISHNA EXCLAIMED—

WHAT HAS COME
OVER YOU, ARJUNA? HAS
YOUR GRIP LOOSENED?
HAVE YOU LOST YOUR
STRENGTH? THIS IS NO
TIME TO BE CONSIDER-
ATE TO A GURU OR
HIS SON.



"KRISHNA'S TAUNTS HAD THE DESIRED EFFECT. WITH DIVINE WEAPONS, ARJUNA ATTACKED ASHWATTHAMA WITH SUCH FORCE THAT THE LATTER FAINTED AND HIS CHARIOT WAS DRIVEN AWAY FROM THE BATTLEFIELD.

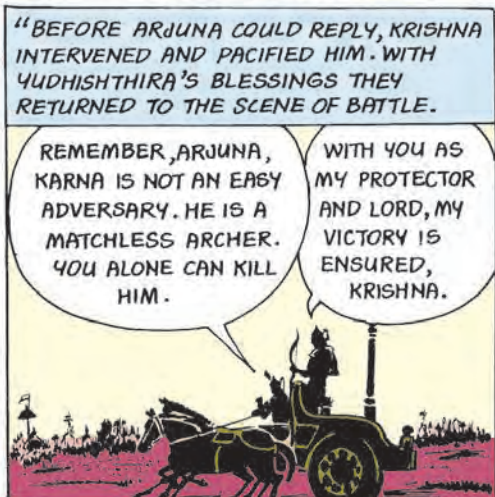
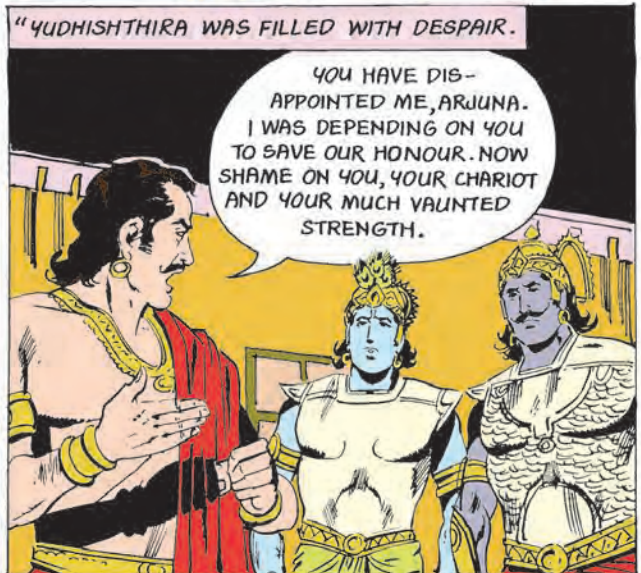
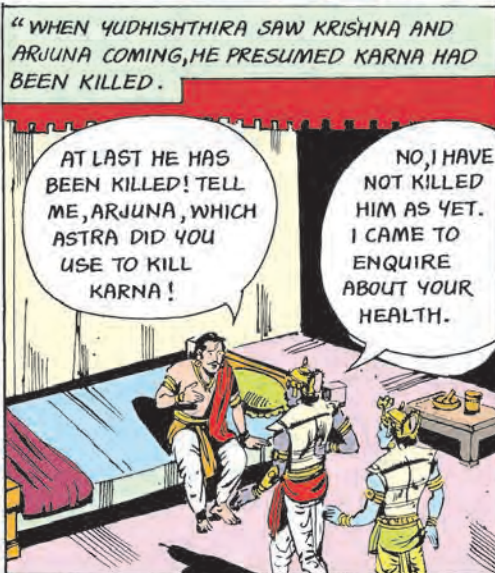


"KRISHNA THEN DREW ARJUNA'S ATTENTION TO KARNA.

BEHOLD KARNA!
HOW GRACEFULLY HE
FIGHTS. THE FIELD IS
STREWN WITH HIS
VICTIMS. IT IS TIME
YOU CONFRONTED
HIM.

YES, I WILL. BUT
WHERE IS
YUDHISHTHIRA?





"BUT WHEN KARNA TRIED TO APPROACH ARJUNA, HIS PATH WAS BLOCKED BY FIVE PANDAVA WARRIORS."



"KARNA ROUTED THEM ALL IN A TRICE."



"IN THE GENERAL FIGHT THAT ENSUED, BHEEMA ENCOUNTERED DUHSHASANA."

COME DUHSHASANA!
I HAVE WAITED LONG
TO FIGHT WITH YOU.
I HAVE AN ACCOUNT
TO SETTLE.

I TOO
REMEMBER
A LOT,
BHEEMA.



"WHEN HIS BOW WAS BROKEN, BHEEMA TOOK UP A HUGE MACE."

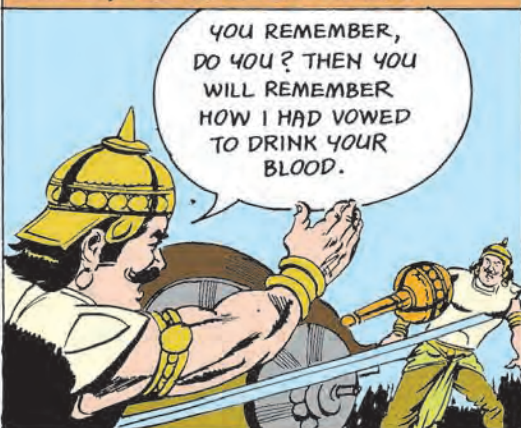
I REMEMBER HOW
YOU HELD DRAUPADI'S
HAIR WITH YOUR SINFUL
HANDS.

I ALSO REMEMBER
HOW SHAKUNI WANTED
TO ENSLAVE HER
ALONG WITH ALL OF
YOU.



"AFTER HE KNOCKED DUHSHASANA OFF HIS CHARIOT, BHEEMA LET OUT A ROAR."

YOU REMEMBER,
DO YOU? THEN YOU
WILL REMEMBER
HOW I HAD VOWED
TO DRINK YOUR
BLOOD.



"BHEEMA TURNED TO DURYODHANA."

I HAVE YOUR BROTHER
AT MY MERCY. TRY AND
SAVE HIM NOW.



"BHEEMA CUT OFF DUHSHASANA'S RIGHT HAND, RIPPED OPEN HIS CHEST AND TASTED HIS BLOOD."



"KARNA WAS GRIEF-STRICKEN. SHALYA COUNSELLED HIM."

DO NOT LOSE HEART, KARNA. YOU ARE DURYODHANA'S ONLY HOPE. COME LET US GO TO ARJUNA.



"KARNA'S SON VRISHASENA WAS TORMENTING NAKULA. BHEEMA CALLED TO ARJUNA FOR HELP."

I WILL KILL KARNA'S SON IN FRONT OF HIM.

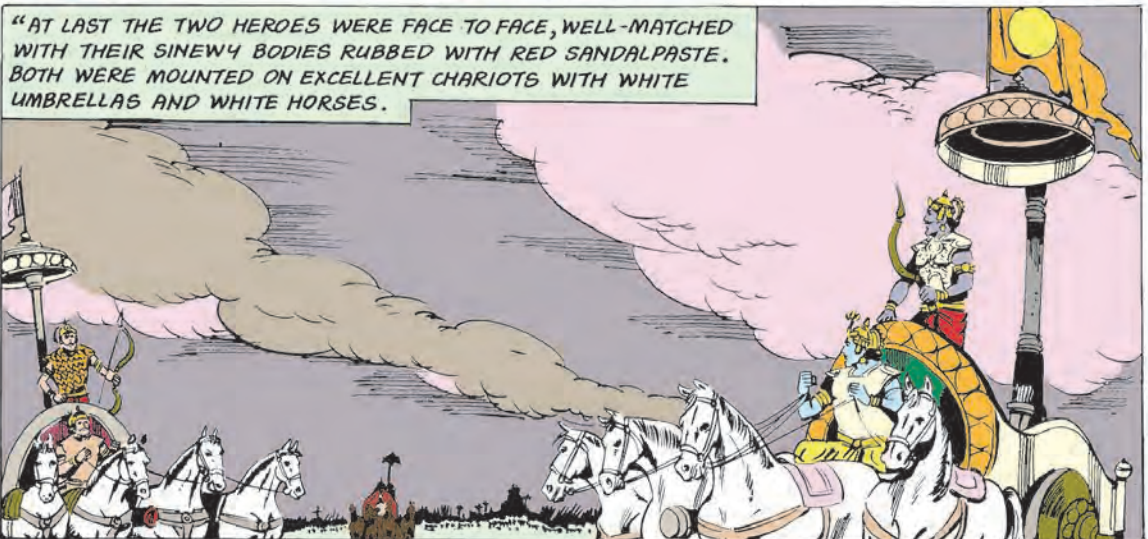


"ARJUNA'S SHARP ARROWS FOUND THEIR MARK. KARNA SAW HIS SON BEING KILLED. ENRAGED HE SAID —

NOW I CANNOT WAIT TO KILL THIS ARJUNA. TAKE ME CLOSER, O SHALYA.



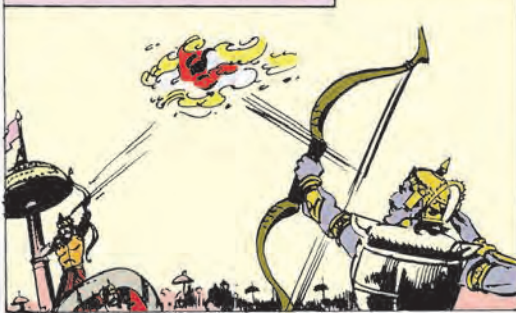
"AT LAST THE TWO HEROES WERE FACE TO FACE, WELL-MATCHED WITH THEIR SINELY BODIES RUBBED WITH RED SANDALPASTE. BOTH WERE MOUNTED ON EXCELLENT CHARIOTS WITH WHITE UMBRELLAS AND WHITE HORSES."



"AS THEY WERE ENGAGED IN THE DUEL, THEIR MEN ENCOURAGED THEM WITH CHEERS AND THE BLOWING OF CONCH SHELLS."



"SOON, INSTEAD OF EARTHLY WEAPONS, THEY RESORTED TO CELESTIAL ONES. ARJUNA SENT OFF THE AGNEYASTRA AND KARNA COUNTERED IT WITH THE VARUNASTRA."



"IT WAS A TUGGLE BETWEEN EQUALS."



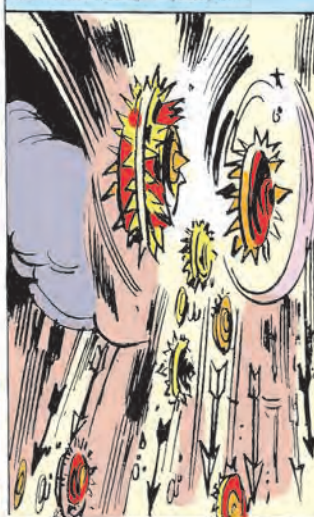
"KRISHNA SAID —

HOW COME KARNA IS ABLE TO DESTROY ALL YOUR WEAPONS TODAY? ROUSE YOURSELF!

I WILL USE THE BRAHMASTRA NOW.



"THE BRAHMASTRA COVERED THE FIELD WITH ARROWS AND DEAD BODIES BUT KARNA'S ARROWS WERE ALSO COMING IN A CONTINUOUS STREAM."



"THE AIR RESOUNDED WITH THE TERRIBLE TWANGS OF THE GANDEEVA OF ARJUNA AND THE VIJAYA OF KARNA. THEY TWANGED TO LET FORTH A BARRAGE OF ARROWS. ELEVEN TIMES KARNA CUT ARJUNA'S BOW STRINGS. QUICK AS A FLASH, ARJUNA REPLACED THEM EVERY TIME. KARNA THEN DISCHARGED FIVE SNAKE-LIKE ARROWS. ARJUNA CUT EVERY ONE OF THEM INTO PIECES."



"SO NUMEROUS WERE THE ARROWS SHOT BY ARJUNA THAT NOTHING — NEITHER KARNA'S CHARIOT NOR THE SUN IN THE SKY — WAS VISIBLE FOR SOME TIME.



"SOON THE WARRIORS BEHIND KARNA FLED IN TERROR OF ARJUNA. KARNA AIMED THE NAGASTRA AT ARJUNA'S NECK.

ARJUNA ! BID FAREWELL TO THE WORLD. THIS IS YOUR LAST MOMENT.



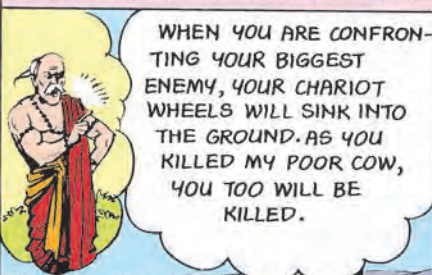
"JUST IN TIME, KRISHNA PRESSED HARD SO THAT THE HORSES BENT DOWN AND THE CHARIOT SUNK BY FIVE INCHES IN THE GROUND. NOW THE WEAPON SCRAPPED PAST ARJUNA'S HEAD AND KNOCKED OFF HIS CROWN.



"ARJUNA GATHERED HIS CURLY TRESSES IN A WHITE KERCHIEF AND RESUMED FIGHTING. BY NOW EVEN KRISHNA AND SHALYA WERE WOUNDED.



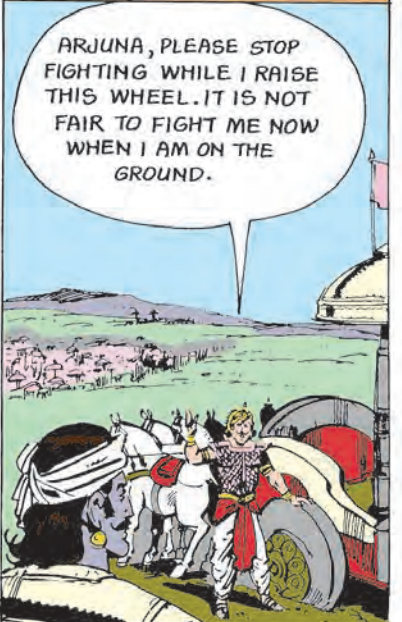
"MEANWHILE, KARNA'S CHARIOT WHEEL WAS SINKING INTO THE GROUND. WHEN HE NOTICED IT, HE RECALLED HOW A BRAHMANA HAD ONCE CURSED HIM.



WHEN YOU ARE CONFRONTING YOUR BIGGEST ENEMY, YOUR CHARIOT WHEELS WILL SINK INTO THE GROUND. AS YOU KILLED MY POOR COW, YOU TOO WILL BE KILLED.

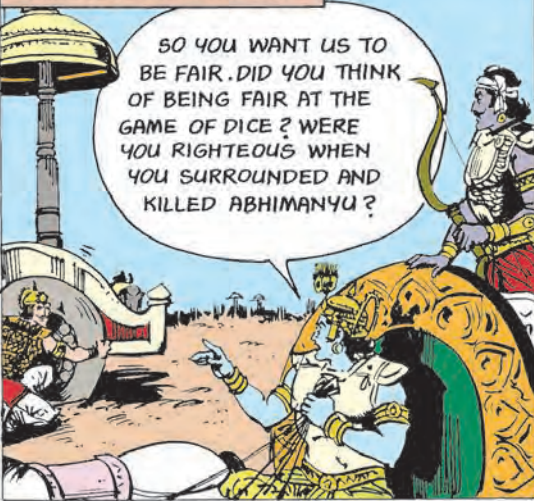


"BY NOW THE LEFT WHEEL WAS TOTALLY SUNK IN THE SOFT EARTH. KARNA WAS FORCED TO DESCEND.



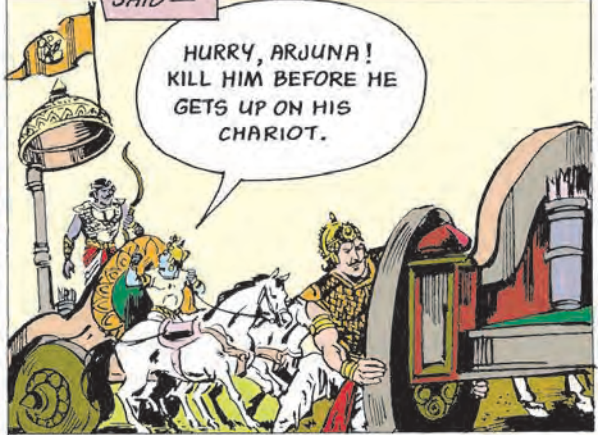
ARJUNA, PLEASE STOP FIGHTING WHILE I RAISE THIS WHEEL. IT IS NOT FAIR TO FIGHT ME NOW WHEN I AM ON THE GROUND.

"KRISHNA WAS FURIOUS."



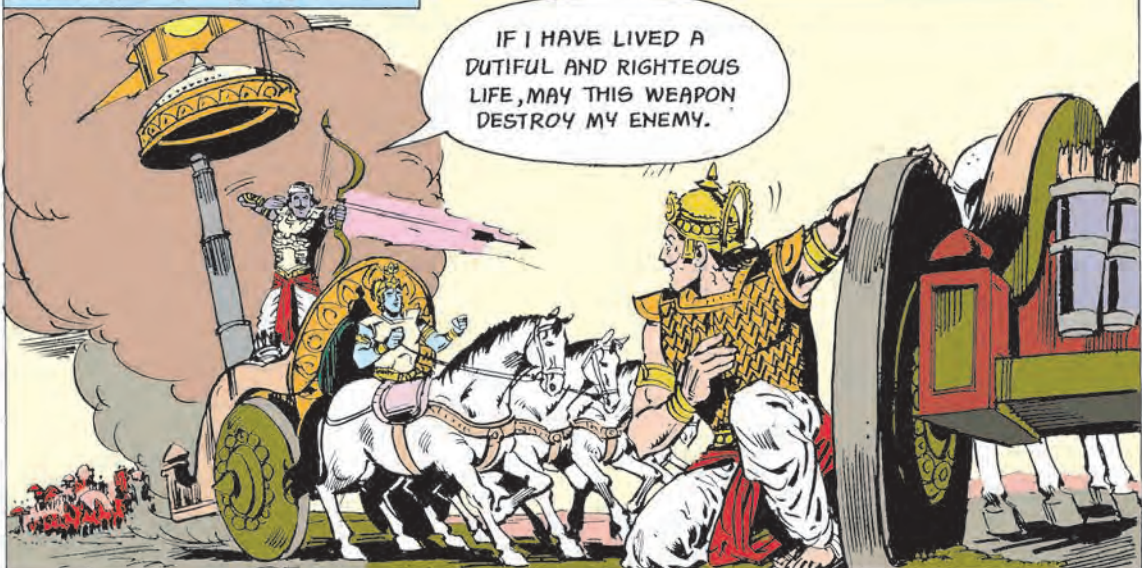
SO YOU WANT US TO BE FAIR. DID YOU THINK OF BEING FAIR AT THE GAME OF DICE? WERE YOU RIGHTEOUS WHEN YOU SURROUNDED AND KILLED ABHIMANYU?

"KARNA CLIMBED ONTO HIS CHARIOT AGAIN AND FOUGHT ARJUNA. WHEN HE MANAGED TO INJURE HIM, HE GOT OFF THE CHARIOT AGAIN. KRISHNA SAID —

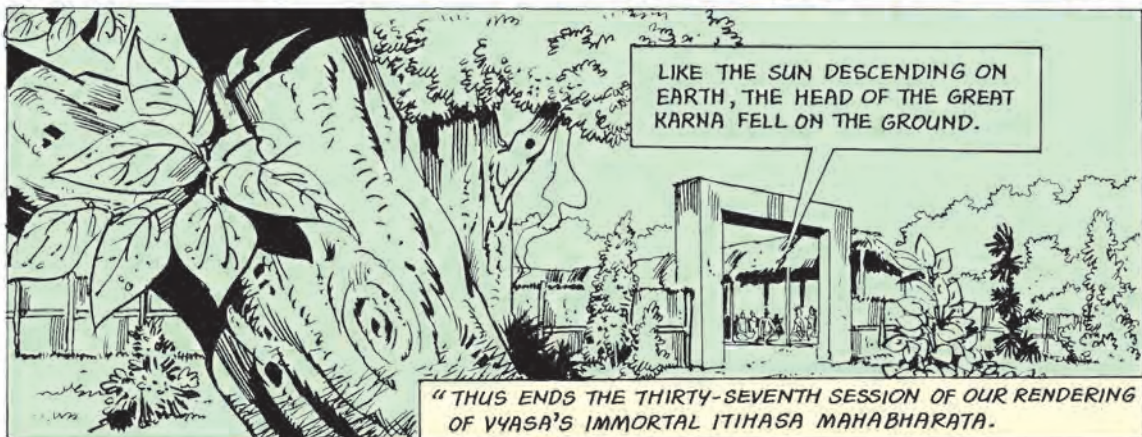


HURRY, ARJUNA! KILL HIM BEFORE HE GETS UP ON HIS CHARIOT.

"ARJUNA INVOKED A DIVINE ASTRA, ANJALIKA, AND AIMED IT AT KARNA WHO WAS STILL STRUGGLING TO LIFT THE WHEEL."



IF I HAVE LIVED A DUTIFUL AND RIGHTEOUS LIFE, MAY THIS WEAPON DESTROY MY ENEMY.



LIKE THE SUN DESCENDING ON EARTH, THE HEAD OF THE GREAT KARNA FELL ON THE GROUND.

"THUS ENDS THE THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VYASA'S IMMORTAL ITIHASA MAHABHARATA."